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CONGRATULATIONS AND COUNSELS

A BOOK FOR BIRTHDAYS

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COUNSELS.

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CONGRATULATIONS

AND

COUNSELS.

A BOOK FOR BIRTHDAYS.

BY

FELIX FRIENDLY,

AUTHOR OF "A BOOK FOR GRANDCHILDREN," "SKETCHES AND LESSONS FROM DAILY LIFE."

BODLEIANA BIBLIOTHECA

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PREFACE.

EVERY human being has had a birthday, and once in each year the anniversary of that day comes round. If it seem unnecessary to any to make such a commonplace remark, they may be reminded of the language of inspiration, "A time to be born, and a time to die." No one needs to be informed of this as a matter of fact, while all need to be reminded of the same for practical purposes. So with birthdays, people need not to be told that they were once born, and that a "birthday" recurs once in each year; but all need to be reminded of what is the great end of life, and to be stirred up to inquire on their birthdays, whether they are keeping that end in view.

The writer having found his own birthday an appropriate season for grateful recollection and penitent supplication, thought that a Manual for birthdays might be useful, and that Christian parents and others might be glad to avail themselves of such a little work, in order to bring eternal things before the minds of those dear to them, on a day when natural affection and spiritual solicitude are specially called into exercise.

The author's great desire is, that God may honour these meditations by making them the means of bringing many to know a new and heavenly birthday; a day which shall be gratefully remembered in time, and looked back upon with holy wonder millions of years hence.

This little work (first published in 1848) has been out of print some twenty years. During that time, the author has had many applications for it, and recently has been earnestly requested to re-

publish it. He now ventures on another edition, revised and enlarged.

Many things which occurred at the time the first edition was published, now come very vividly to the mind, producing humbling and solemnising reflections. How many changes have there been in family and other connections since then? Deaths, marriages, a new generation rising up—how much do these facts include? How often the heart muses on those dear young ones, and wonders what their future will be when we are gone! Such prying is of no use; but praying will be. So, while we indulge in loving *congratulations*, and try to give a few kind *counsels*, let the heart constantly rise in praise to Him "whose righteousness is unto children's children;" who "hath been mindful of us, and who will bless us."

"Thus we begin the lasting song,
And when we end our race,
Let the next age the praise prolong
Of God's abounding grace."

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A BOOK FOR BIRTHDAYS.

I WISH YOU MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY.

THESE words have been long used on birthdays, by almost common consent. But, as with other hackneyed expressions, some may begin to get weary of the well-worn sentence. Still, whatever language may be employed to express the heart's affections and desires when commemorating the natal day, the sentiment contained in the oft-repeated phrase is retained. Nor will the words themselves very soon be wholly cast aside. Children, who feel more than they reason, will still pour out their heart's affection in them; and some of the elders will be somewhat disappointed if, on their birthdays, they do not hear the ancient salutation, round which so many fond associations cling.

The import of these words may be thus expressed —MORE DAYS, MUCH HAPPINESS,—"I wish that you may live long, and that your life may be filled with joy." The majority of birthday wishes refer only to earth, and to happiness to be enjoyed in time; but there are some who look much farther, and who, while they desire that their beloved ones may long continue with them, and enjoy much earthly felicity in life's various relations, desire for them still more earnestly, spiritual and eternal happiness.

Friends may wish each other a long and happy life, but God only can bestow these gifts; it will be wise, therefore, to pray as well as wish. If all general wishes had been accompanied by as many earnest prayers, there is reason to conclude that much more happiness would have been enjoyed. It is much easier to utter an empty wish than to breathe an earnest prayer; but a few moments' communion with God, on behalf of those whom we love, is far more likely to be of service to them than a thousand compliments, renewed year after year. Not that we would say aught against the courtesies of life, much less against the utterances of affection; by all means let the one be done—

but let not the other be left undone. A deep conviction that "in God we live, and move, and have our being," and that real happiness can only come from Him the blessed God, will stir us up to pray earnestly, both for ourselves and others.

Let all remember, that while health and happiness, as regards body and soul, are the gifts of God; that He generally bestows both in connection with the use of means. There are certain rules which must be observed by those who would "live many days, and see good" (Ps. xxxiv. 12). In vain do friends wish the intemperate, the passionate, the discontented, and the envious, many days and much happiness. The course they take, the passions in which they indulge, are calculated to shorten their days, and while they last, to make them full of misery to themselves, and of trouble to those around them. Let all consider life and health as sacred trusts committed to them by God, to be tenderly guarded, in order that they may be devoted to His glory. Let all who would be truly and permanently happy obey the gracious counsel, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," so shall they realise the precious promise, "They

that seek the Lord shall not want *anything* that is good."

But how few, comparatively, of those who are greeted on their birthday, realise *many* happy returns of the same! How futile are human wishes, how weak the tenderest earthly solicitude! Many who have welcomed, with smiling faces, the well-known salutation, have, before the next birthday, been in the silent grave. Others have seen their earthly treasures go down in some rude storm of trouble, and themselves, as it were, tossing on a single plank; while how many have entered an eternity for which they were quite unprepared; where no day returns, for all is outer darkness,—where no happiness comes, for all is despair; where no friend salutes, for all are absorbed in their own irremediable grief! It may be said that these are sad themes for a joyous birthday; but if you, dear reader, have not fled to the only Refuge, even the cross of Jesus, these are the truths which you need to ponder, and that "TO-DAY."

There is one—the dearest Friend of all—who, on your birthday, greets you on the dusty highway of life, and not merely wishes you all good, but invites

you to partake of soul-satisfying blessings. His name is full of life, it is a fountain of health, and a treasure-house of blessings. Do you know its virtue — have you felt its power? Have you already in your closet, this morning, feasted upon it? Did it, like a warm beam from heaven, fill the atmosphere of your souls when you first awoke to consciousness? Then, blessed are you, "for all things are yours, whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, for ye are Christ's." But, if it be not so,— if, while surrounded by greeting friends, you are still without God in the world, how sad is your case! Yet, wondrous fact! it is still "the acceptable time, and the day of salvation," and you are now invited to be partaker of a deathless life, and heir of a glorious immortality. Let, then, your birthday be rendered memorable in the annals of your life, by your entire surrender to God, and submission to His righteousness. Then will it be the birthday of real happiness in your heart, and, while greeting friends surround you on earth, the angels of heaven will rejoice over you as a sinner born again.

"To know the Author of our frame
Is our sublimest skill;
True science is to read Thy name,
True life to obey Thy will."

HOW OLD ART THOU?

CURIOSITY frequently asks this question, but has often to go without a reply. Some persons are fond of talking about their age, and others as carefully conceal it. Reader, if you desire to keep this point a secret, I have no wish to be inquisitive. All I am anxious about is, that *you* should endeavour to gain some improvement from the question which a mighty king put to a venerable patriarch, —"How old art *thou?*"

The question reminds you of a *commencement*, and of *progress*. Whatever may be the number of your years, whether you are in the buoyancy of youth, the prime of life, or in decrepit old age, you are a creature of comparatively very recent date.

"Mysterious oft it seems to me
How I a being came to be;
Since, through the myriad years gone by,
Suns rose and set, yet lived not I;

> "Streams flowed, birds sang—the earth, the sea,
> So grandly moved; were fair to see;
> Each part was portion of a whole,
> Yet I was not a living soul."

Yes; you and I must subscribe to the humbling language of one of the ancients, "We are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow" (Job viii. 9). Think of the years which passed before you were born; think of eternity before time itself began, and learn hence your own insignificance. God's sovereign will gave you being, His Almighty power brought you out of nonentity. You, whose years are so few, are "the offspring of God;" and if you have been brought to know Him as your Father in Christ, to trust to His mercy, love His holiness, desire His glory, you may confidently conclude that His thoughts concerning you were from all eternity "thoughts of peace," and His purposes full of rich love and mercy. Then, wondrous thought! your history commenced countless ages before your actual being; for all who are united unto the Saviour in time, were chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. Though *we* are but of yesterday, the

counsels of eternity, as far as God has revealed them, and the transactions of time, as far as He has recorded them, are ours to study, to rejoice in, and to improve.

From the period when you first came into being, moments have been gradually accumulating, and forming days, weeks, months, and years. Many of these are hidden from view, amid the dim shadows of unconscious infancy. What tears you then shed, what sorrows you then felt, what transports then filled your tiny heart, as objects new and wonderful were looked at, or sounds sweet and harmonious were listened to, are now nearly all forgotten. A few facts—some of them sorrowful, and others joyous—loom through the mists of childhood; yet very little of that sportive period is distinctly remembered. But still there was progress; stature was advancing, strength increasing, reason budding, character forming, and conviction struggling. How far you are advanced beyond this, I cannot say; suffice it for my purpose, that you are old enough to understand what is here written,—old enough to feel responsibility, to know that God has to do with you, and that you

must have to do with Him. You are old enough to give an account of yourself to God; old enough to be born again.

But, is it so? It may be that at this question a tear of gratitude may trickle down a furrowed cheek, and a voice trembling with emotion may say, "Yes, forty or fifty years ago did this great change take place. Then I passed from death unto life. My previous years I count a blank, as regards good; and all praise to the atoning blood which obliterated the stains of these sinful years. Much have I to mourn over, and much to be grateful for. God is faithful, I am hopeful; and this hope, which sanctified my soul in youth, sweetly solaces me in my declining age."

Dear young people! listen to this testimony. Ponder it well, I pray you, and seek grace to choose the better part. Perhaps you have heard friends remark, when you have told them how old you are, "that you are tall for your age!" and those who love you best may consider you to be intelligent and amiable; but the great question is, doth He, who looketh not on the outward appearance, but on the heart, testify "that there is some

good thing in you toward the Lord God of Israel?"

"Whence came I? Memory cannot say.
What am I? Knowledge will not show.
Bound whither? Ah! away, away,
Far as eternity can go:—
Thy love to win, Thy wrath to flee,
O God! Thyself my Helper be."

THE BIRTHDAY ABUSED.

SOME writer has observed that the Scriptures make mention of only two birthdays being *kept*, which are those of Pharaoh and Herod—see Gen. xl. 20; Matt. xiv. 6. On both these occasions there was an execution. Pharaoh hanged his chief baker; and Herod sent and beheaded John in the prison. In both cases, there is reason to fear that there was sensual mirth, as well as cruel acts; and, alas! too many, in keeping their birthdays, have been imitators of wicked Herod in his unholy revelry: such persons are cruel both to themselves and others.

It would be foolish to attempt to prohibit all

hilarity on such occasions; most persons regard the birthday as a season of joyousness, and families frequently meet together to enjoy in each other's society the bounties of a kind Providence. If such family festivals are kept within due bounds, and mingled with gratitude to God, they should be encouraged rather than otherwise. They strengthen the bonds of social love, endear the different parts of a family to each other, and call all the kindlier feelings of our nature into exercise. We cannot afford to spare anything which serves as a corrective to the selfish tendencies of our hearts, and so we cannot give up "keeping of birthdays," only all should be sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.

Many, we fear, never think of this. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," would seem to be the principle upon which they act. "The harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of His hands," Isa. v. 12. Yes, God is forgotten by common consent in many families. The God in whose hand their breath is, and whose are all

their ways, they do not glorify, Dan. v. 23. And though no hand may come and write terrible words upon the wall where the unsanctified festival is held; though no prophet come from God to rebuke the feasters; and though each may depart well pleased with his ungodly mirth and carousals, yet an eye "which is in every place beholding the evil and the good," hath seen all, and a sentence is written which, unless repentance intervene, must shortly be fulfilled.

Oh! it is sad to see immortal beings merry while they remain enemies to God. To behold them dwelling in security while the thundercloud of God's wrath is lowering over them. It is mournful to hear them rejoicing in the beginning of an existence, which, after a few years of thoughtless mirth, will be one of unmitigated and eternal misery. Christians, try and wake the sleepers, faithfully warn the careless ones, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but, as a child of the day, seek grace in the possession of heavenly joys, and the manifestation of holy dispositions, to show that religion is happiness.

THE BIRTHDAY NEGLECTED.

WHILE many persons keep their birthdays, some profitably, and others improperly, there are those who neglect them altogether. Some because they do not know *when* they were born; while others who do know it, neglect to commemorate the day for various reasons.

Most persons who have felt solicitous about their fellow-creatures, have met with some who did not know how old they were. In most instances such persons had their lot cast in the lowly classes of society, their parents were reckless and careless, while the poor children were brought up in crime and ignorance. A few have struggled out of this deep quagmire, and have become rich in earth's treasures; others have been assisted by the hand of Christian kindness, and some have been made monuments of divine grace. Though such know not their natural birthday, they know their spiritual birthday, and keep it with great joy.

Some persons who know the day of their birth, do not at all keep it. This may be a matter of

taste with them, they may choose to be singular, or there may be other and deeper reasons. Their life, perhaps, has been one of trial and sorrow, there has been in it little which appears desirable, and at times they are almost ready to regret the day of their birth, and to wish that their existence was at an end. "There is nothing for me to live for; I wish I were dead," said a despondent and despairing person. "If you are not satisfied with God's government in this world, I don't know why you should be in another," was the rebuking reply of a wise friend. Others say, "With whom should we keep our birthday? Our friends were always few, and those few are gone, or have proved false-hearted. We are left alone in an unfriendly world, and have little cause to rejoice in the day when we commenced our cheerless existence."

To such we would say, do not conclude too hastily. Remember that those who cursed the day of their birth lived to repent of their words, and that one of them testified, "Why should a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Sad though your case may be, you are yet "a *living* man." Life, the seedtime for

eternity, is yet left to you. Your days may be few, eternity may be close at hand. Spend not your time in murmuring, provoke not God by discontent, but humble yourself under His mighty hand, who can turn the shadow of death into the morning, and make a life of disappointment the portal to endless happiness.

> "If thou wouldst reap in love,
> First sow in holy fear;
> So life a wintry morn may prove,
> To a bright endless year."

Is life full of trouble? The gospel is full of comfort, and close to where you lay repining, the waters of life are welling up, and inviting your parched soul to drink and be refreshed. Are your friends dead, or have they proved untrue? There is a loving and Almighty Friend in heaven, who, bending down from His glory, invites *you* to come and reason with him; yea, to be reconciled to him, and engages to be *your* faithful and all-sufficient Friend.

Say not then, with Jonah, that you do well to be angry, but like Job cry, "Behold, I am vile, I will lay my hand upon my mouth." So shall you,

with weeping Jeremiah, prove "that it is good for a man that he both hope, and quietly wait, for the salvation of the Lord."

"Can I do nothing for you?" said a kind visitor in an Army Hospital to a sick man. "*Can you undo?*" was the reply, in a tone and with a look full of agony, remorse, and despair; and so putting away from him all God's words of grace, he passed away to give an account of the deeds *done* in the body. How many are like this! "Never despair (says one) while out of the regions of despair." In one sense God Himself cannot "*undo;*" but He is "ready to forgive;" to "blot out sin," to "remember it no more," and, for the sake of what Christ has done, to deal with the soul who has done only evil as if he were innocent; yea, more, to bless him who rests on the name of Jesus, according to His own estimate of, and His own delight in, His well-beloved One."

"Seest thou yon cross afar?
There died the Son of God;
That cross it leads and beckons *thee*
Along the heavenly road."

THE BIRTHDAY IMPROVED.

WHILE some abuse and others neglect their birthdays, the grateful Christian will seek to get some good to his own soul, and to bring some glory to God, by a right observance of this season. If we read the diaries of the most eminent saints, we shall generally find, that it was their practice not only to recollect this day in the family, and to receive the greetings of their friends, but to call it to mind in the closet, and in the exercise of various graces to seek intimate communion with God.

The birthday should be a day of *remembrance.* We should endeavour to look back as far as the eye of memory can reach. We have been living in a world full of incident, in which millions of immortal beings have been acting their part, in which numerous associations of these individuals have been formed for different purposes, and which, however apparently full of confusion, is governed and managed by a Wise, Good, Holy, and Almighty Sovereign. A close survey of this world will teach us much concerning the character of God, and the

character of man; of the beauty and excellency of the one, and the deformity and vanity of the other.

But we should especially call to remembrance what relates to ourselves; our sorrows and joys, our trials and deliverances, the friends we have parted with, and the connections we have formed, the mistakes we have made, and the lessons we have learned, should all pass in review before us.

It should be a day of *examination.* Have I learned wisdom from what I have seen? Am I more than ever convinced, that man is evil, and that God is good; that the world is a shadow, and eternity a reality? How far have I profited by what I have passed through? Has affliction softened or hardened? Have mercies produced gratitude, or nourished pride? Have losses, bereavements, and disappointments constrained me to go to the living God, or have I planted another gourd in the place of the one smitten by the worm and the wind? What effects have the means of grace produced upon me? Has the Bible been my food, Christ my refuge and treasure, the Holy Spirit my guide and keeper? How have I filled up my various relations in the family, the

Church, and the world? I must soon lay them all down. Cannot they be improved so as to bring in a larger revenue of glory to God and of good to man?

Penitence should characterise a birthday. The sins of one day, how many? The sins of a year, the sins of a lifetime, only God's eye can trace these, only His infinite mind can reckon them up. Now then, let the heart humble itself before God, as the sins of youth or riper age come up to mind; with the publican let us smite upon the breast, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" and with the royal mourner cry, as we gaze adoringly on the cross and the fountain which flows therefrom, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." The 51st Psalm is a most suitable portion for a birthday meditation, for all who know themselves aright.

And so is the 103d Psalm, for while the soul mourns and weeps on account of sin, *gratitude well becomes it.* We may sing, even all of us who trust in the Saviour, "*But I obtained mercy.*" "Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgiveth all thy iniquities, who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender

mercies" (Ps. ciii.) The mercies which a Christian has to record in the course of a year are many and great indeed; and should make the birthday a day of rejoicing, a day of holy wonder and devout gratitude.

> "New mercies, each returning day,
> Hover around us while we pray,
> New perils past, new sins forgiven,
> New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven."

This joy in the God of salvation will be the soul's strength. Feeling his obligations to infinite mercy, he will stir himself up to more diligent effort, and will determine by divine assistance to start afresh in the Christian race.

The sight of another milestone on the road of life, with grace to read, as the pilgrim swiftly passes it; the name of the city of light and love to which he is travelling, kindles fresh courage, inspires with new hopes, and constrains more diligently to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. What can withstand or intimidate him who realises the glorious sentiment, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain?"

"The mistakes of my life are many,
The sins of my heart are more;
And I scarce can see for weeping,
But I stand at an open door.

"My mistakes His love shall cover,
My sins He will wash away;
And the feet which shrink and falter,
Shall walk through the gates of day.

"If I turn not from His whisper,
If I let not go His hand;
I shall see Him in His beauty,
The king in the far off land."

THE PARENT'S BIRTHDAY.

In every happy family, a parent's birthday calls affection into vigorous exercise, and affords an opportunity for some tender manifestations of the same. Eyes sparkle with delight, affectionate words are uttered with trembling emotion or lisping lip; little presents, or bouquets, are prepared; and tokens of love reciprocated with real delight. It may be, also, that a social entertainment is provided, or some healthful and harmless excursion planned and executed, much to the joy of all parties concerned. On such a day the young heart over-

flows with pleasure, and those more advanced in life yield themselves up to real sympathy with the joy. Still the birthday of a parent is *a serious affair*; viewed under its various aspects, it is capable of much practical improvement, which we should endeavour to realise.

Your child is growing older, is becoming responsible; some habits are already formed; but there is still much susceptibility. Make the most of it while you can. "Go to a brickyard and take a brick, freshly moulded, and press a leaf upon it,—a gentle pressure of the finger will suffice; yet, subject that brick to the kiln, and it will come back with the impression ineffaceable. Build it into a house, and you may see it across the street. The child's mind is the moist brick. Delay not to bring the truth of God into contact with it. Under His blessing, the beautiful impression will last for ever."

A first-rate farmer was taking a friend over his grounds and showing him his stock. The sheep were especially admired, and the visitor asked how he succeeded in producing such flocks. His simple answer was—"*I take care of my lambs, sir.*" O parents, while careful and troubled about many

things, be sure you take care of the lambs. Bear in mind that lambs need pastime as well as pasture. The following remarks are worthy attention :—"Many a child goes astray, not because there is a want of prayer or virtue at home, but simply because home lacks sunshine. A child needs smiles as much as flowers needs sunbeams. Children look little beyond the present moment. If a thing displeases, they are prone to avoid it; if home is a place where faces are sour and words harsh, and fault-finding is ever ascendant, they will spend as many hours as possible elsewhere. Let every father and mother, then, aim to be happy. Let them look happy. Let them talk to their children, especially to the little ones, in such a way as to make them happy."

We will suppose the parent whose birthday it is, to have retired to the closet for self-examination and confession of sin, to seek grace to act aright for the future, and to plead with God on behalf of all the dear ones. Into that sacred solitude we will not intrude; it is the very place for parents who deeply feel their responsibility and weakness. May God meet them there.

Perhaps some parent's eye may read this appeal who is a stranger to communion with God. Alas! many parents labour from birthday to birthday for their children's temporal good who never ask God for His blessing—who do not seek to train up their children in the right way. Yet, *prayerless parent* (how awful is the association of these two words), yet you are spared another year. Let the goodness of God lead you to repentance, and when you have humbled yourself before God and embraced His great salvation, then will you say, "As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord."

THE ELDEST CHILD'S BIRTHDAY.

If I knew, dear young friend, your exact age and circumstances, your station in life, how many brothers and sisters you have who are younger than yourself, and whether you loved the Saviour or no, I might be able to address you more pointedly than I can do now. My remarks must, of necessity, be somewhat general; but you should seek to *make them more* personal by prayer and meditation.

You are the eldest child in the family. This is often reckoned a post of honour, and is always one of responsibility. Would that the last was more considered than the first, but, alas! we have all naturally much pride and little prudence; and young people especially, are in danger of grasping at shadows and neglecting substance—of craving the homage of fellow-creatures, and neglecting to seek the approbation of God.

You are the first-born. Over you fond parents have lingered with delight, exulting in their new relationship, and invoking blessings upon your infant head. Your life has been spared a considerable number of years, while many younger than yourself have passed away into eternity. Consider on this your birthday the great outlay of care and kindness, both divine and human, of which you have been the subject, and ask whether you have sought to render to the Lord according to His benefits towards you. Do you remember your Creator in the days of your youth? Have the Saviour's gracious words, "I love them that love Me, and they that seek Me early shall find Me," taken any effect upon you? or are you yet thought-

less and prayerless, without God, without hope, and under condemnation? Your first, your grand concern should be, to be reconciled to God, and then you shall be adopted into God's family, and this will well prepare you to act your part in the family of which you are a member.

Your parents look for much from you. They have, no doubt, their cares and trials. You have helped to add to them; now help to bear them. Are you the eldest daughter? Be the companion and comforter of your mother; expect more pleasure in her society than in the society of any other person. Show those little attentions to your father which a tender female heart suggests, and which are so soothing to a toil-worn mind. Are you the eldest son? Let no companion usurp a mother's throne; and whatever connections are formed, be sure a good place is reserved in your heart for her. Respect your father's authority, and ever make him your confidant and friend.

Remember that you must assist to form the character and mould the habits of your younger brothers and sisters. Cherish affection towards them, and manifest it in every possible way. Do

not stand aloof from their little pleasures, but try and give their minds a right direction. You will increase your own happiness, while you endeavour to make others happy, and if you are loving, you will surely be beloved.

Have you thought of the importance of *influence*, how it flows, and spreads, and will last for ever? Away among the Alleghany Mountains is a spring so small that an ox, on a summer's day, would drain it dry. It steals its unobtrusive way among the hills till it spreads out into the beautiful Ohio. Flowing on a thousand miles, it joins the Mississippi. It stretches away twelve hundred miles more, till it falls into the ocean, which is an emblem of eternity. So with moral influence. It is a rill—a rivulet—a river—ending in eternity.

"In this great world of ours
  Nothing is small or poor;
For each hour's smallest thing is knit
  To the long evermore.

"The common deed or word,
  Of which we take no heed,
Ends in a vast eternity,
  As in the tree the seed."

Let your birthday be a time of serious inquiry into your conduct in these respects, and a time of earnest prayer to God that He would guide you in the way everlasting, and make you a blessing to many.

THE TWELFTH BIRTHDAY.

How birthdays come! old time has roll'd
  A year along; improve the day.
A child that's spared to twelve years old
  Should think, believe, repent, love, pray.

Think of that great and glorious ONE
  Who formed, supports, and blesses you;
Trust in His well-beloved Son—
  His manger, cross, and glory view.

Repent, for you have sinned oft,
  Your heart is still to evil prone;
The Lord can make it pure and soft,
  And He will hear the contrite groan.

Oh! love that God who stoops to bless,
  Whose character so gracious is;
Fly to His sovereign, boundless grace,
  And rest upon His promises.

Praise Him for all He hath bestowed,
  For parents, sisters, brothers, friends;
Praise Him who shows a heavenly road,
  And for a guide His Spirit sends

Pray for that Spirit every day,
  To be your teacher, helper, guide;
That you may choose the heavenly way,
  And never from it turn aside.

Jesus, who once at twelve years old,
  Within His Father's temple stood,
Will you in His embrace enfold,
  If you rest on His precious blood.

Jesus who said, "Forbid them not,"
  When little children sought His eye,
Will prove that He has not forgot
  These precious words, if *you* draw nigh.

May you and all you love be found
  Pilgrims in that celestial road
That He marked out; and then abound
  In much thanksgiving unto God.

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE ONLY CHILD.

THIS is very frequently a grand day; especially if the parents of the loved one move in the higher ranks of life. Friends are invited to commemorate the day, and considerable pains are taken to give effect to the celebration. In this there is frequently more folly than wisdom displayed, and more worldliness than religion, even among professedly religious people. Some persons who are niggardly in their charities are sumptuous in their entertainments. If the money *misspent* upon children had been spent upon poor orphans, many a heart would have sung for joy. But the world will take its own course, and, alas! many professors of religion will imitate it. Turn away, O Lord, our eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken us in Thy way.

How mysterious are the arrangements of Divine Providence, and how sovereign its dispensations as regards the gift of children. Some persons who are poor and afflicted have large and trying families; and others who have abundance of property

are without any children, or have *an only one.* God cannot do wrong. Let not the burdened ones murmur or repine at poverty and trials, but seek grace to train up their children for God. The riches of eternity are not withheld from them, and great will be the joy of those poor Christian parents who shall welcome their children among the living in the New Jerusalem. Let not those who have no children be discontented, or if, like Hannah, they are of a sorrowful spirit on that account, let them like her pour out their souls before God, and then, whether they receive a Samuel or not, they "shall go their way, and be no more sad."

But how intense sometimes is the love that twines around the *one child.* It may be that it is the last survivor of several, and but a tender plant; or, perhaps, the sole remaining pledge of a dear union now, alas! broken. The stem whence the lovely bud sprung has been transplanted to another world, and the father's fond heart clings around the image of the departed one. Parents, if the former supposition be true, or, parent, if the latter, *beware!* Beware of an idol. Be very anxious not to constrain God to send a worm to wither your

gourd, or, worse still, beware lest your over-indulgence produce a crop of wild gourds, and there be "death in the pot," as regards both its existence and yours. In Ashbourne Church there is the following inscription on a beautiful monument:—

"TO PENELOPE,
ONLY CHILD OF SIR BROOK AND SUSANNA BOOTHBY.
She was in form and intellect most exquisite.
The unfortunate parents confided their all to this frail bark,
and the wreck was total."

If you, fond parent, would escape such a wreck, love your child subordinately to God. Seek grace to train it for eternity. As your earthly affections are centred here, let those affections be impregnated with heavenly principles. Love your child's soul *most* and *first*. Aim to engraft God's truth therein, and to attract your dear one to seek the immortality of glory which the gospel unfolds. Then will your solicitude be tempered by submission, and your earthly love be sublimated and refined. Abraham had but his Isaac, and never parent more tenderly loved a child; but he was willing to surrender him without a murmur at God's command;

and he had trained him so well, that Isaac was nothing loath to be laid upon God's altar.

And you, dear child, around whom so many fond affections twine, abuse not the love so liberally showered upon you. You cannot derive happiness from being loved, unless you love again. And ever remember, that there is a love more deep, tender, and undying than that of the fondest parent. Seek an interest therein, and while you realise the love of the Saviour, all earthly relationships will be doubly blessed.

There is a picture with which, I daresay, you are familiar, which represents a rock in the midst of a stormy sea, bearing upon its summit a cross, to which a female figure, just recovered from the angry waves, clings, faint and exhausted, while at her feet a man's hand, trying to grasp part of a wreck, is just disappearing in the black water.

"What does that mean?" asked a little child.

"It is called 'The Rock of Ages,'" was the answer.

"Then that means Jesus, to whom we cling for salvation?"

"Yes; you know the hymn says, 'Other refuge have I none.'"

"Oh! yes," said the child, after a moment's hesitation, "but that rock isn't *my* Jesus; when I cling to Him, He reaches down and clings too."

If, like this dear child, you know this blessed fact, you will indeed have a happy birthday, and your joyful song will be—

"'Tis not the infant's feeble grasp
Which holds the mother fast;
It is the mother's gentle clasp,
Around her darling cast.

"Just so Thy child would cling to Thee,
Knowing Thy pity long;
For, feeble as my faith may be,
The hand I clasp is strong."

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE ABSENT ONE.

THE heart can still cling around those whose hands we cannot grasp; thought can hold communion with those whom the tongue cannot salute; and prayer avail for those to whom friendship and love cannot minister.

It is a birthday in the family, but not, as usual, *a day of cheerfulness* and greeting. The family

meet, and a tear stands in the eye, as the name of a dear one is mentioned. All feel that the absent one still belongs to them, although far away. Oceans, it may be, roll between; but love spurns distances, and defies time; it still embraces its object, while a smile succeeds the tear, as hope tells of a meeting and greeting time, ere long to be enjoyed.

Separations are painful to loving hearts, and the recurrence of particular days often make them especially so, reviving vividly the remembrance of the parting pang. But, like many of our sorrows, such pains are often profitable. The cords of affection are drawn closer around those that remain, and a greater degree of carefulness is induced, lest we do anything to cause bitter reflections should others be separated from us. And then it stirs up the heart to more fervent prayer. Was not the father's voice this morning tremulous with emotion, as the absent one was alluded to at the mercy seat? Did not every heart thrill with emotion, and every *new* heart agonise in supplication? It is well! Whatever draws us nearer to God, we may reckon among our chief mercies.

And then there is the loving epistle, bearing the date of the well-remembered day, and the name of the well-known place. The letter which several hands combine to write, and all hearts unite to send; in it breathes the father's yearning love, the mother's undying tenderness, the sister's soft affection, and the brother's manly regards, with the little one's playful remembrances. Oh, what a deep debt do families owe him who invented epistolary correspondence, and to him also who projected so cheap a plan of carrying it on. Let parents and children, brothers and sisters, gladly avail themselves of the same, and make it not merely a vehicle of news and information, but a means of fanning affection and promulgating truth.

Absent one! thou art loved still; continue to reciprocate love! Break not the link which binds thee to that dear circle. Thou mayest still move in the orbit of love, and still feel the attractive power of home. Let thine heart gravitate toward that loved spot, and it shall preserve thee from becoming a wandering star from social joys. Beware of procrastination in reciprocating the outpourings of affection. Be prompt and open in correspond-

ence. Think of the gloom that would spread through the family circle should *you* discover a declension of filial affection. Young men, who have left home; young women, exposed to the world's snares,—think of a mother's warning and a father's prayers when temptations assail you, and tremble at the thought of so acting, as to pour a flood of sorrow into a happy home.

But, perhaps, there is an absent one whom the eye can no more gaze upon. In the family Bible, out of which the father read this morning, there is a record of a name who is no longer a dweller upon earth; whom no letter can reach, for whom no solicitude now avails. Yes, it is the birthday of the departed one. If in infancy the eye was closed on the scenes of time, however sweet and lovely was the bud which death so ruthlessly tore down, let us say, "*It is well!*"

> "Shall we lament that God hath housed
> A tender, pleasant plant;
> And ere the storms of life came on,
> Prevented every want?"

Let us comfort ourselves with the thought of the good Matthew Henry, "that children are not born

in vain if they help to people the New Jerusalem."

If the dear lamented one lived to express a hope in Christ, how fragrant is its memory; and how sweet the hope cherished! And oh! let the thought, how fragile are our loveliest domestic plants, keep us from fixing our hearts too firmly on them. Above all, let anxiety for the safety of the souls of our dear ones take precedence of every other feeling, and let each bereaving dispensation quicken it into more vigorous exercise.

If the recollection of sad bereavements makes the birthday a time of sorrow, it will be wise to ask, What have we left to give God thanks for? A Christian sailor, who had lost his leg in battle, once observed, that nine persons out of ten would say, "What a pity it is you have lost your leg;" and only one in ten, "What a mercy that the other was preserved." A poor Irishman who was travelling barefoot thought it a great misfortune to have no shoes, but meeting a man hobbling along without legs, he thanked God for his bare feet. A paralysed gentleman at a watering place, being found *more cheerful* than usual, assigned as a reason, "I

was thinking of my crippled condition when I heard in an adjoining room the cough of a poor suffering consumptive, and while feeling for him, I realised how much I had to be grateful for."

Nor let us fail to remember that we once enjoyed the mercies that God has in wisdom removed from us, perhaps for a long time. A dear little girl had been taught to pray specially for her father. He had been suddenly taken away. Kneeling at her evening devotion, her voice faltered; and as her eyes met her mother's, she sobbed, "O mother! I cannot leave him *all* out. Let me say, thank God that I had a dear father once, so I can keep him in my prayers." Many stricken hearts may learn a sweet lesson from this child. Let us remember to thank God for mercies past, as well as to ask for blessings for the future.

"Acquaint thyself with God,
In Jesus and His cross;
Read there that love which makes all loss
But gain, all gain but loss.

"Acquaint thyself with God
In childhood's youthful prime;
So shall thy life a foretaste prove
Of heaven's long summer-time."

SORROW AND SOLACE.

"Oh my son, my son."—2 SAM. xviii. 33.
"Am not I better to thee than ten sons?"—1 SAM. i. 8.

A PARENT'S joy! a parent's woe!
Ah! who can tell that ne'er has felt;
How warm maternal feelings glow,
How soon paternal bowels melt!
What rapture deep, what anguish wild,
May fill the heart that owns a child!

Take down the harp that silent hangs,
'Tis tuned for tones of deepest woe;
'Twill utter forth thy heart's keen pangs,
Make other hearts with pity glow;
Sweet psalmist, take thy *own* harp down,
And mourn the fall of thy fair son.

He takes it, and, with bleeding soul,
He stands beside th' untimely bier;
Hark! down all time the numbers roll,
Bids erring parents come and hear.
"O Absalom! my son! my son!
Ungrateful, yet beloved one!

"Would that thy sire for thee *had* died,
  Would that my crown *had* decked thy brow,
Ere all unwashed, unsanctified,
  Thy soul did its long journey go!
Oh, agony! till now unknown,
Ah, whither, whither art thou gone?"

Thus mourned the man of God's own heart,
  And solemn truths his griefs reveal;
Ere from the bier our thoughts depart,
  May God divine instruction seal.
Warn us of sin, and wean from earth,
Where joys are strangled in their birth.

Not so you mourned, if through Christ's blood
  You trust your loved one rose on high;
While you poured forth grief's bitter flood,
  He swelled th' eternal minstrelsy.
Oh, happy change! from earth and woe
To heaven, and love's meridian glow!

Not in rebellion was he found,
  Not spurning sire's or mother's love;
But all was peace and hope around,
  When wisdom bade him hence remove:
To you it seems a darksome cloud,
Which doth Jehovah's dealings shroud.

But glory soon shall gloom disperse,
  And then, God's reasons all displayed,
You shall His righteous acts rehearse,
  Whose hand was on your darling laid;
Who took him to His glorious throne,
That you might press more eager on.

E'en David raised a cheerful song,
  Ere yet he quitted sorrow's vale;
He lived to prove God's arm was strong,
  That faith o'er nature could prevail;
Could hush grief's tempest in his breast,
And make a sorrowing parent blest.

E'en so may you, the Lord still lives,
  Father of mercies is His name;
Rich comforts *He* the sad heart gives,
  Go, mourner, and put in your claim.
So shall your songs to heaven arise,
To bless that Friend who never dies.

Better than son or daughter He,
  Who, bending from His gracious throne,
Says, "Cast thy burden all on Me,
  To Me make all thy sorrows known.
My sympathy, oh, come and prove,
And rest in My undying love."

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE AFFLICTED ONE.

"A man who was blind from his birth."—JOHN ix. 1.

IN many families there is an afflicted *one*. Some are afflicted in a similar manner to the young man above-mentioned. Other families have one or more deaf and dumb. Some children are lame, others afflicted with an incurable malady, and a few are destitute of reason. Why God permits such cases to exist we cannot say; except that we are sure that they are intended for the moral discipline of those among whom these afflicted ones are cast. To humble pride, to teach us dependence upon God, to awaken sympathy, and exercise submission, are, doubtless, among the ends which God has in view.

Let those families which are mercifully exempted from such trials be truly thankful; but let them beware of pride and self-glorying. What avails a perfectly formed body if the mind be empty and vain, and the soul deformed by pride and evil

passions? It may be, vain young man, that the rude bodily structure which you are inclined to look at with contempt contains a soul much fairer than yours. If you, fair maiden, grow up in pride and vanity, far better that you were lame or blind. If any one, however clever, employs his intellect in reasoning against God, and in evading His claims, he will wish some day that he had been born an idiot.

Let no one cast reflections upon the families thus afflicted. "Who did sin (say the disciples); this man, or his parents?" They took it for granted that one or the other had so acted as to cause God in judgment to withhold the blessing of sight. The Lord's answer reproves them, and instructs us: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be manifested in him." We should not judge according to the appearance, nor try to account for all that God does. Our business is not to find out *why* so much misery is permitted in the world, but to do all we can to lessen it. Let us show all kindness toward such afflicted families; and if they are poor, do all in our power to assist them. Especially to the

afflicted *one*, let all tenderness be shown. Ah! there is one whose love is not likely to fail, however afflicted and deformed its object may be; it is in such cases that a mother's love appears so beautiful and triumphant.

But let others aid the mother in her devoted kindness. Brothers and sisters can do something to soothe the sufferer's pain, and to make the long hours pass away more pleasantly. On the birthday of the afflicted one, let some extra tokens of affection prove that you do not think him a burden; cause him to feel, by the tenderness of your love, that there is yet something worth living for. Leave not the sad heart to pine over the thought of being neglected by all. Win his gratitude, and you will be abundantly repaid.

But having pleaded the cause of the afflicted one, I would say a few words to such of this class as are capable of understanding. God hath given you life, and it is His sovereign will which hath made you what you are, and placed you where you are. Repining will do you no good, but resignation will. Listen to what God says to you in His Word. You have much leisure for

studying it, let it be your companion, and you will not be solitary; your comforter, and you will be happy; your teacher, and it will tell you of a world without sin or sorrow; and point you to a guide who will safe conduct you there.

Your birthday, may be, is one of sorrow, and looking forward, you see little else before you. Look to Jesus, cast yourself upon Him, and your light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

"There's not a spot on this green globe,
Beneath yon arched sky;
But has a Rachel, or a Job,
To suffer or to sigh.

"Here perfect bliss can ne'er be found,
The honey's mixed with gall;
'Midst changing scenes and dying friends,
Be Thou my all in all."

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE SOLITARY ONE.

"Lover and friend hast thou put from me."—Ps. lxxxviii. 18.
"Hope thou in God."—Ps. xlii. 11.

MANY persons have to spend a solitary birthday, and it is to them a day of unusual sadness, because of its distressing contrast with the days that are past. An aged woman, for instance, sits in her little room, and calls to mind the time when her husband was at her side, and her children around her; when her life was a very busy one, yet full of happiness, mixed, of course, with cares and trials. Then, when the birthday morning came, many a salutation cheered her, and many a kiss of affection was imprinted on her cheek; *but it is not so now*, and she is ready to take up the words of an ancient mourner, "Call me not Naomi, call me Marah, for the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me." Her husband is no more, and one after another, most of her children either preceded or followed him to the silent grave. The few who remain are far away, it may be in foreign lands, and she feels

alone in a friendless world. These facts, and the feelings which the recollection of them produce, make the birthday a weeping day.

> "Of joys departed ne'er to be recalled,
> How painful the remembrance!"

Take another case. A man who in early life was comparatively affluent, and who delighted on the return of his natal day to call around him the friends of his boyhood, that they might together refer to those sayings and doings which were at the time a source of so much happiness. Alas! he has lived to know experimentally the truth of that Scripture, "The rich hath many friends, but the poor is separated from his neighbour;" and now he spends his birthday alone, reflecting upon the uncertainty of human riches, and the instability of human friendship.

Survey one other instance. Consider the emigrant, who with sad heart left his native land, a solitary adventurer in a distant country. His dear native village, his father's cottage, and the familiar faces of beloved ones, flit before the eye of the mind, as he recollects what morning it is; but *there is no* greeting for him as in time past. I

would not say a word to increase his feeling of loneliness, or to enervate his heart for action; but still I cannot regret that he calls the day to mind, and should be sorry if he could think upon home without emotion.

But to all those, and to all similar supposable cases, there is one rich word of counsel and comfort, "HOPE IN GOD." Jehovah is the widow's God, and if sought unto, He will be the friend of the friendless, and the home of the wanderer.

Perhaps, my widowed friend, God was forgotten when husband and children were all around you. Like Martha you were careful and troubled about many things; now, if like Mary you have chosen the better part, and are willing to sit at the feet of Jesus, and hear His words, He will surely come to you, hold sweet communion with you, and then you will not feel lonely; His presence will make the wilderness smile, and you will come up from it leaning upon your Beloved.

And you, who have exchanged affluence for poverty, and who have lived to prove that earthly friends are often like summer brooks; you, perhaps, were once ready to say, "Soul, take thine

ease, eat, drink, and be merry." What a mercy that God, instead of taking away your soul into an eternity for which you were quite unprepared, took away your idols; and now He is willing to give you Himself, and to become your God and portion for ever and ever.

Wanderer in a distant clime; what a mercy will it be, if God has led you into a wilderness in order to speak to your heart. Listen to His voice, hope in His mercy, trust His promises, and you shall find that "the Lord loveth the stranger, and giveth him food and raiment." Yea, "that the Lord God is a sun and shield, that He will give grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

"O great Vine Dresser! teach my heart
Thy searching knife to bear;
With every branch of pride to part,
And bless my Pruner's care.

"Yea, quell my overgrown array,
And if it be Thy will,
Lop fortune, friends, and fame away,
So Thou art with me still."

A PILGRIM AT SEVENTY.

"Seventy has come and gone,
The name of God be blest;
Life's work is nearly done,
And soon I hope to rest.

"But He who bade me go,
And work my little day,
Will daily strength bestow,
And guide me in His way.

"To Him I'd all commit,
On Him for all depend,
While low before His feet
In penitence I bend."

THAT great and good man, Dr Chalmers, wrote as follows when he was entering on the decline of life:—"It is a favourite speculation of mine, that if spared to sixty, we then enter on the seventh decade of human life, and that this, if possible, should be turned into the Sabbath of our earthly pilgrimage, and spent Sabbatically, as if on the shore of an eternal world, or in the outer courts, as it were, of the temple that is above."

It may be that if this devoted servant of God had been spared to live *through* that decade on

which he entered, that he would *not* on his seventieth birthday have been any more satisfied with himself than heretofore. It is well to aim high, though we never reach our aim, but still sigh out, "Not as though I had attained." Many have heard, and all should keep in mind the saying of an old writer, "Never expect to find that in the law which is only to be found in the Gospel, or that in self which is only to be found in Christ, or that upon earth which is only to be found in heaven." As one gone before truly sang—

"There are mansions exempted from sin and from woe,
But they stand in the regions by mortals untrod;
There are rivers of joy, but they roll not below;
There is rest, but it dwells in the presence of God."

The writer can truly say that when he had completed his seventieth year, only the thought of infinite mercy, infinite merit, infinite might afforded him the least comfort. But having these, and believing that God would be glorified by his dependence upon them, he dared not despair, but began his "tenancy at will," with the resolution, "I will hope continually, and praise Thee more and more."

The Psalm from which the above words are taken was his meditation on that day, and as it was the Lord's-day, he made part of it the subject of discourse. The 71st Psalm is the old pilgrim's peculiar property. It is generally allowed that David wrote it a short time before his death. He was not a very old man, "the days of his age were threescore years and ten;" then having "served his own generation, by the will of God, he fell asleep." He seems indeed to have *sung* himself asleep.

He is described in the first verse of 1 Kings as weak and sinking—"They covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat." Yet there is good reason to conclude that the touching and instructive scene in 1 Chron. ch. xxix., comes *after* this, and that there we see an answer to his prayer, "Now I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not, till I have showed Thy strength to this generation, and Thy power to every one that is to come." Let us who are aged, seek grace so to use this sweet psalm that we may have a revived experience toward the end of life, and that our "last words" may be about Him of whom David so grandly testified—see 2 Sam. xxiii. 1–7.; Ps. lxxii.

It is a goodly sight to look at this aged palm-tree laden with the fruits of righteousness. The mercy of God was indeed magnified in him, when we consider how far he had wandered, how near he was brought, and how God used him as an instrument of blessing to others down to the end. Our meditation on the day referred to was founded on vers. 7, 8, 9—"I am as a wonder (or prodigy) unto many, but Thou art my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with Thy praise, and with Thy honour all the day. Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth." We considered what David really was—what he was to *many*, what ONE was to him; what he desired to be for that ONE, and what he needed that ONE to do for him. But the pilgrim of seventy will inflict no more of his sermon upon his readers, but will only ask them to join in thanksgiving for so many and undeserved mercies so long continued, and to solicit their prayers that his few remaining days may be like those of David, that so, having had much forgiven, he may love much.

"I thank Thee for the present, with its light;
For daily labour, and for answered prayers,
For all sweet thoughts, and fancies softly bright,
That soothe mine earthly cares.

"I thank Thee for the past with all its loss,
Its gentle discipline and needful pain;
And for the love that lightened every cross,
And loosened every chain.

"I thank Thee for the future, with its store
Of hope and promise for the coming years;
And for the glory shining evermore
Through the dim mist of tears.

"I thank Thee for the grace that kept my feet
In the old paths wherein the fathers trod;
I bless Thee for the loved ones I shall meet
Before the throne of God."

TWO AGED MEN'S BIRTHDAYS.

"I am this day fourscore years old."—2 SAM. xix. 35.
"Lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old."—JOS. xiv. 1.

How few survive to this age. The majority of our race die before they reach the period of youth, many die in youth; the path of manhood is strewed

with victims, and only a few stragglers reach the age of eighty. In vain we say—

> "Gather ripe fruits, O death!
> Strew not the pathway of the tomb with flowers,
> Invade not childhood with thy withering breath,
> Pass by, and touch not youth's bright sunny bowers!"

Death heeds us not, but gathers the aged and the young alike into his garner, and in the short space of thirty years a generation of the human race pass into eternity.

Only a few live to say, "I am this day fourscore years old." And what then? What are these ancients constrained to add to this testimony? "It is labour and sorrow, it is soon cut off, and we flee away." Hear the testimony of the aged Barzillai:—"I am this day fourscore years old; and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men or singing women? wherefore, then, should thy servant be a burden to my lord the king. Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in my own city, and be buried by the grave of my father, and of my mother." These are words of wisdom,

worthy of being pondered over by all aged persons on their birthday. They show a mind weaned from earth, heedless of its attractions, and dead to its pleasures. It is sad to see aged men greedy of gain, or grovelling in sensual enjoyments; or aged women fond of dress, and taking pleasure in trifling amusements. Concerning many the poet's words are too true:—

> "Though grey our heads, our thoughts and aims are green,
> Like damaged clocks, whose hands and bells dissent,
> Folly sings six, while nature points at twelve."

Not so Barzillai. The good man—for such we can but deem him—looks steadily into the grave, because he had learned to look beyond it. He seems anxious to spend his last days in peaceful retirement and prayerful preparation for the great change which awaited him. My aged friends, I pray you imitate him; do not go on delving and mining in this poor earth, till, exhausted from very feebleness, you gasp and die. Do not cry, as the horse-leech, "Give, give," and still pant for earth's treasures, till the heart ceases its pulsations. If you have competence, stand by and let the young have an opportunity; the dusty highway, the

craggy precipice are not suitable places for your tottering feet. Retire and prepare for eternity.

But though Barzillai deemed himself too old to be entertained at court *by* the king, he did not deem himself so old as to be excused from ministering *to* the king. He did all he could to comfort his afflicted sovereign. Here, again, he is a pattern for the aged. We are never too old to serve God, and to do good to our generation. His people are never so feeble but they may bring some glory to His name. God has promised "to bear them even down to hoary hairs," and He has also said that they shall "bring forth fruit in old age."

The good man who said, "I am this day fourscore and five years old," was stronger than Barzillai, though five years his senior. The difference between aged people is very great. Some are feeble and worn out before they are seventy, while a very few are vigorous both in body and mind twenty years longer. Such was Caleb. It is very interesting to read the interview between him and Joshua, as contained in Joshua xiv.; and the young will find it profitable to study his whole history, and to seek grace to imitate it. His name signi-

fies "*all heart*," and the sum of his life's history is, "*that he followed the Lord wholly.*" He was one who came out of Egypt, and so could contrast the house of bondage with the land flowing with milk and honey. He was one of the twelve spies, and, with Joshua, dared to be singular when their brethren failed; witnessing for God when a nation distrusted him; bent on pressing forward when others were for going back into Egypt. And now these two old veterans meet, talk together of the things that had happened, and still encourage each other in God to obtain new victories and possessions.

In this respect Barzillai and Caleb furnish a contrast. The first shrunk back from publicity; the second, strong in the Lord, still desired to "do exploits." The one pleaded his weakness, the other stated that he was as strong at eighty-five as he had been at forty. Well, some have to honour God by bearing His will, and others by active service. One waiting in the sick chamber, overhanging the grave, and the other in the battle-field of life. So that God is glorified, it matters not.

> "Let all come, and last, and end,
> As shall please our heavenly Friend."

Aged man, art thou a man of God? If not, it is indeed an evil day with thee. Thy hoary head is *not* a crown of glory, because *not* found in the way of righteousness. Yet on this thy birthday let mercy once more reason with thee. Thou must become a little child in order to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Does the question arise, "How can a man be born when he is old?" I answer, the thing is only possible with God. Go to Him with the prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." His arm is not shortened, though thine is got feeble; His ear is not heavy, though thou art grown dull of hearing. A look of the heart will be salvation, though thy eye is got very dim. A soldier lay wounded on the field of Waterloo, speechless, and almost dead. An officer riding past him suddenly reined up his horse and dismounted. It was a *look* from the dying man, so piteous, so pleading, that caused him to do so. That *look* spoke volumes. It said, "I am perishing, too weak to speak; yet, oh save me if you can." That look brought him everything he asked for, and more; *that look, as he lay* on the battle-field, saved him.

There is life still for a look. God in Christ still says, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved." Aged man, yet unsaved, it is true the evil day is come upon thee, but the day of wrath is not yet come, and God in infinite mercy yet calls for thy long-averted gaze. He sets the Cross of Christ before thee, and says, "LOOK! men as old as thou have thus looked, loved, and sung—

"For the first time I see
The glory of the Cross; how dark before!
Thanks to the mighty Lord that swept away the mist,
And from my eyes the veil so kindly tore.

"That Cross it suits me well:
It soothes my fears, and speaks true words of peace;
It breaks my bonds, and liberates my soul;
It healeth all my wounds, and bids my sorrows cease."

THE GODLY GRANDSIRE'S BLESSEDNESS AND BENEDICTION.

"And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz, in the land of Canaan; and HE BLESSED ME." —GEN. xlviii. 3. "God who fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel who redeemed me from all evil, BLESS THE LADS."—GEN. xlviii. 15, 16.

THOSE who are favoured to have parents spared till they become parents themselves, naturally de-

light in taking their children to see grandfather and grandmother on their birthdays. And if parents and children have chosen the better part, all parties will be anxious to see children's children trophies of God's grace, and witnesses of His faithfulness. To such the scene before us must be truly touching and instructive. Here is Joseph with his two sons visiting aged Jacob, to hear somewhat of his eventful history, and to receive his blessing. The parties meeting, the circumstances under which they met, and the conversation which took place, all claim, and will richly reward our closest attention. The characters of Jacob and Joseph exhibit many of the graces of the Spirit, and their history brings out many of the wonders of Providence. They here meet under circumstances of trial, for sickness has laid Jacob low, and he is fast sinking into the grave. Joseph is a pattern of filial love and respect to grown-up children, and especially to those whom Providence has exalted to wealth and honour. The glories of a court, the cares of a kingdom, could not detain him from the sick room of his father. And was not Joseph amply repaid by what he heard? How

touching Jacob's reminiscence of the beloved Rachel, Joseph's mother, showing that she was not even then forgotten. How grateful to a father's heart were the blessings pronounced upon his sons, when, with unerring precision, his aged sire revealed the glorious destiny of his posterity. How welcome to his affectionate bosom the thrilling words, as kissing and embracing his dear boys, the venerable man said, "I had not thought to see thy face, and lo! God hath showed me thy seed also."—"*God bless the lads!*"

It is no small mercy to have an interest in the counsels and prayers of those who through a long life have walked with God. Let children and children's children heed such counsels, and prize such prayers. Let them show all due respect to their aged friends, render them every kind office in their power, and, above all, seek grace to tread in their steps, as far as they followed Christ.

While admiring this beautiful family sketch, we should study the history of Jacob and its closing scene to encourage our souls to hope in God under the darkest circumstances. His life had been a stormy day, but it was light at eventide, and he

spent his last hours in contemplating the character of God, and confessing Him to others. God as Almighty and All-sufficient was the object of his adoring contemplation. His omnipotence had sustained, and His all-sufficiency supplied him. He called to mind divine manifestations—"God Almighty appeared unto me;" and gratefully acknowledged Divine goodness—"and blessed me." Things that had troubled him so sorely while passing through them, and concerning which he had spoken so unadvisedly, now all appeared full of wisdom and love, and the shepherd-like care of God filled him with adoring gratitude.

If we are passing through trying scenes and perplexing circumstances, let us still hope and wait, press onward, and look up. A traveller in Madeira states that one morning he started early to ascend a very high mountain. When approaching the summit he became enveloped suddenly in a dense fog, and cried out in his perplexity; but he heard the voice of the guide, a little a-head, saying cheerily, "Press on, there is light a-head." He did press on, and was soon bathed in sunlight, with a clear blue sky above him. Soon the fog rolled

away, then a glorious prospect greeted his eye, and rewarded all his toil. Hark—

"Hope is singing, singing sweetly,
Softly in an undertone,
Singing e'en as God has taught it—
'It is better further on.'

"Sits upon the grave and sings it;
Sings it when the heart is lone;
Sings it when the shadows darken—
'It is better further on.'

"Further on; but how much further?
Count the milestones one by one?
No; no counting; only trusting—
'It is better further on.'"

THE IMPORTANT PERIOD AND THE GREAT QUESTION.

"He is of age, ask him."—JOHN ix. 23.

THE birthday upon which young people come of age is justly considered as an important period in their existence. Then some are out of their apprenticeship, and others come into the possession of property, while those whose twenty-first birth-

day is distinguished by neither of these events, yet look forward to it as a time to be desired. Then, in some instances, comes the test of character, and, alas! many fail. It would be well if young people coming of age would seek advice of those who have had some experience in the world before they form connections or engage in business; and, above all, they would do well to ponder over that gracious direction, "Acknowledge God in all thy ways, and He will direct thy paths."

But young people are *of* age in the Scripture sense before they *come* of age in a legal sense. "He is of age," say the parents of the young man whose eyes the Lord opened. By this I understand that he was old enough to understand the questions proposed to him. Such are now addressed. You are not infants. You were such once, and then you were tenderly cared for, fed, and clothed. You are not *little* children. Very lately you were, but that period is also gone by, and you are now youths, or young people—in a word, you are RESPONSIBLE. This is the meaning of the expression, and a very solemn meaning it is. Man now holds you responsible for your actions, and so does God.

RESPONSIBILITY! You have often heard the word mentioned. Do try and understand it. Before you, in God's Word, is the *rule* for your actions; within you is the *witness*—your own *conscience;* above you is the *Judge*, the all-seeing, Almighty, and holy God; before you is ETERNITY. There *you* must dwell in perfect happiness or inexpressible misery, reaping fruits corresponding with the seed which you have sown (Gal. vi. 7, 8). But this is not all; if you stop here you will get only an imperfect view of the case. Within you is the *disease* of sin; before you the gospel *remedy*, which you are invited to make use of; above you is the crown of glory, which can only be yours by "faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." If you perish, it will be as the rejector of a salvation which you greatly need, and which is freely set before you.

You are arrived at an age capable of understanding all this, and feeling its importance. Thousands no older than you are have repented of sin, embraced the Saviour, chosen the way of holiness, and devoted themselves to God, and I want you to feel that you are arrived at *a most important age or period of life.*

You are not only responsible, but you are now most susceptible of feeling. Look at that imbecile old man; speak to him; he cannot take in your meaning. He lived fifty years in the possession of the means of grace; he trifled with them, and quenched a thousand convictions. Ah! it is an evil day with him *now*. Look at that incurable lunatic; it is in vain to preach salvation to him, for alas, while reason remained, he despised the Saviour. He is not responsible *now*, but he was once; and those responsible years all await the judgment-day.

You, dear young friends, know what sin is; you have heard of judgment, of hell, and heaven; of the gospel, and how blessed those are who embrace it; and often have the thrilling words been addressed to you, "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" How deeply solemn is your situation! A voice seems to say to me, "*Be earnest*,"—"ASK HIM!" I will not burden you with many questions. Take this one,—*Is your soul safe for eternity?* This is *the* question, the *grand* question. You cannot be happy here without the hope of salvation. You cannot honour

God unless you are saved by Jesus. If this hour was your last, your only question would be, "*Is my soul safe?*" This question may be satisfactorily answered now. God has provided salvation; He invites you to partake of it; engages to save all who come to Him; and thousands can testify that He is as good as His word. Can you do so?

Now, what say you to the question? Does conscience give an answer in the negative? Then do you mean to let it remain so? Will you still go on caring about your body, your clothes, your food, and neglect your soul? Are you in doubt? Let me assist you to decide. Where are you building your soul's hopes? what is the element in which you delight to live? what is your grand desire? and what your most delightful employment? Is Christ your hope—holiness your element? God's presence and blessing your desire? and to promulgate His truth and seek His glory your great business? Then be encouraged; follow on to know the Lord; seek daily the presence and power of the Holy Spirit; and if, like the young man whose eyes Jesus opened, you have to suffer for His name, He will give you strength to be His witness, and will

own you as His in the presence of His Father and of His holy angels.

"Early set forth on thine eternal race;
The ascent is steep and craggy thou must climb;
God at *all times* has promised sinners GRACE
If they repent;—but He ne'er promised TIME.

"Cheat not thyself, as most, who *then* prepare
For death, when life is almost turned to fume;
One thief was saved, then no man need despair,
And *but* one thief, that no one might presume."

A BIRTHDAY PRAYER FOR YOUTH.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."—Ps. xc. 12.

GOD hath into existence brought,
And made my life His care;
Let birthdays waken solemn thought,
And lead to earnest prayer.

The years of childhood now are passed,
And the world's wildering maze
I have to tread, oh let me haste
Unto a throne of grace!

Lord, teach me o'er my sins to weep,
  Then view the Lamb of God;
And kindly guide my youthful feet
  In wisdom's pleasant road.

Oh clothe me with humility,
  Increase my faith and love;
Saviour, on earth I 'd follow Thee,
  And reign with Thee above.

The future I to Thee commit,
  Oh guide me with Thine eye;
My bliss be at Thy feet to sit,
  Then 'twill be gain to die.

THE FOOLISH BARGAIN.

"Esau for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."—HEB. xii. 16.

ESAU parted with a large future blessing for a small *present* gratification. His language was, "What good shall this birthright do me? I shall soon die; why should I care about my posterity? Let me look out for myself, and enjoy myself now!"

For thus acting the Holy Spirit calls him "a profane person." Alas, how many similar bargains are being constantly made! The world's markets are ever open, and Satan's constant aim is to induce immortal beings to prefer the interests of time to those of eternity, the gratification of the senses to the possession of God's promises.

To obtain a complete view of Esau's case, Genesis xxv. 27–34 should be read carefully. Methinks some persons after reading it will be ready to say, "Was it not very unkind in Jacob? did he act right in this affair?" I answer, this does not so much concern us. We are ever prone to go from the main point which God sets before us, asking how can this or the other point be reconciled, instead of diligently inquiring, what does it teach me, what good can I get therefrom? Many, for instance, puzzle themselves concerning the elder brother in the parable, instead of admiring the father's tenderness, and imitating the prodigal's repentance. We do not apologise for Jacob—far from that; but we are anxious you should not lose the lessons God intends to teach you by Esau.

The birthright was a divine gift. It included

authority (Gen. iv. 7, xlix. 3), a double portion (Deut. xxi. 17), a special blessing (Gen. xxvii. 4), and the priesthood (Num. viii. 16, 17). Esau parted with all this, more especially the prospective advantages for his family, for a mere trifle—a mess of pottage. In so doing he was said to despise it. For thus acting he lost the blessing. "For ye know that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Heb. xii. 17). That is, he found no place of repentance in Isaac's mind. He did repent himself, but he could not alter what had been done.

One thought I would wish particularly to impress upon the young, which is, that sins which have entailed much misery, involved much loss, and brought down fearful judgments, have appeared to some to be very little. It seemed but a small act for Eve to pluck fruit from a tree, for Uzza to touch the ark, for Achan to secrete a small portion of the spoil of a city, for Saul to spare the Amalekites, but God did not think so. Sins committed against plain commands, com-

mands which are intended to be tests of character, are very aggravated.

But who are in danger of imitating Esau now? There is a danger, and to keep from it is the design of the apostle in introducing this sad case. Look into the *world;* how many are selling the pleasures of a happy home, all dear domestic joys and family comforts, for sensual gratification, and the intoxicating draught! Look *round* the Church; how many who seemed "not far from the kingdom of God," sacrifice all their religious connections for some earthly alliance! How many young professors have quenched convictions, seared their consciences, and turned their backs upon religion, for some worldly advantage!

Look in the Church. It is here the apostle directs our attention. He evidently introduces Esau to illustrate what he had said concerning "failing of the grace of God." The allusion is to a person starting in a race, and giving it up without attempting to reach the goal; turning aside to some other pursuit, and thereby proving that they were never right-hearted (Heb. iv. 1). Such became roots of bitterness in the Church (Deut. xxix.

18, Acts viii. 23); and many are defiled. How much injury does one carnal, covetous, earth-loving professor inflict upon a community.

How different the conduct of noble-minded Moses (Heb. xi. 24–26). He would not sell his birthright, nor part with his heavenly hopes, for all earth's treasures. David was like-minded, and would not have his portion in this life like the men of the world (Ps. xvii. 15). Paul counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. O blessed cross! by which the world becomes crucified to us, and we to the world. O wonder-working faith! which overcomes that world by which so many millions are overcome to their eternal destruction.

To which class, dear young friend, do you belong? Which are you most anxious to get—the presence of God, or the possession of gold? Which do you most diligently seek—communion with heaven, or comfort on earth? After which do you most pant—usefulness in the Church, or honour in the world?

Do not trust to outward privileges and connections: Esau was the son and descendant of pious

ancestors, favoured with religious privileges; yet he was a profane person. Set your heart upon obtaining spiritual blessings. They are to be had freely. *You* need not injure any one by becoming yourself possessed of eternal riches. Go, and like Jacob plead for them, and you shall surely obtain the blessing.

THE STRIKING CONTRAST.

"Many shall rejoice at his birth."—LUKE i. 14.
"Good were it for that man if he had never been born."—MARK xiv. 21.

JOHN the Baptist and Judas the traitor were alike in some respects. Both sustained holy offices, both had to do with the Saviour's person, both died a violent death, and concerning both we have a testimony borne in God's Word.

But the contrasts are many and fearful. The one was true-hearted, the other false; the one baptized the Saviour, the other betrayed him; the one was a blessing to many, the other a curse to himself; the one is a bright example, and the other a blazing beacon.

Fellow immortal, who upon your birthday reads this contrast, think of John and Judas, and ask, which am I imitating, what influence am I exerting upon others, and what am I likely to be through eternity?

Those only live to some purpose in whose birth others have reason to rejoice. There are some pests in society whose very existence seems a bane; they are like the upas tree, breathing poison around them, or, like a volcano, a source of dread and desolation to all who dwell near them. There are others from whom flow rivers of living water, who are the true children and imitators of Abraham, blessed of God, and made blessings by Him. To them God is as a dew, and they are as a dew from the Lord, being both beautiful and beneficial.

Reader, is it so with you, is your life a blessing, would you be missed if taken out of the world, or is your room of more value than your company?

> "Tis infamy to die and not be missed,
> Or let all soon forget that thou didst e'er exist."

Are you a professor of religion—a member of a church?—is that church the better for you? Are

you labouring to save souls, to edify the church, to cheer your pastor, and to encourage the young in wisdom's ways? Has truth in you an advocate, holiness in you a representative, and the poor in you a friend? If so, many have cause to rejoice in your birth; *you* have not been born in vain!

But if you live a life of pleasure, if your profession is a profitless one, if the love of money or the love of any other sin prevails in you, then do you betray the cause which you have solemnly vowed to sustain, and have reason to fear that you will live to realise that it had been good for you if you had never been born.

Two gentlemen were walking through a park together, when one of them, who was a naturalist, observed a wood-worm, about three inches long, forcing its way under the bark of a fine sycamore tree, and observed, "Let that worm alone and it will kill that tree." One of the gentlemen was the owner of the park, and it was agreed that the black-headed worm should be left to pursue its work. The next summer the leaves of the tree dropped off very early, and in the succeeding year

it was dead. "Ah!" said one who had it pointed out to him, "let us learn a lesson from that dead tree. How many who once promised fair for usefulness in the world and the Church, have been ruined *by a single sin.*"

> "Oh for a soul magnanimous to know,
> Poor world, thy littleness, and let thee go,
> Not with a gloomy, proud, ascetic mind,
> That loves thee still, and only hates mankind;
> Reverse the line, and that my temper be,
> To love mankind, and pour contempt on thee."

THE WONDROUS PROPOSAL AND WISE PRAYER.

"Ask what I shall give thee."—1 KINGS iii. 5.
"Give thy servant an understanding heart."—1 KINGS iii. 9.

THE four first kings who reigned over Israel furnish a very profitable study for young men. In Saul, they may trace the subtle workings of self-deception; in David, the triumph of sincerity; in Solomon, the beauty of early piety, and the sad consequences of unmortified passions; and in Rehoboam, the evils which result from pride,

giving heed to flatterers, following injudicious counsellors, and neglecting the advice of the aged and experienced.

We are called now to the contemplation of Solomon. His history begins in glory, and ends in gloom. A feeling of sadness steals over us as we behold his bright sun obscured, and see him busily employed in forming a mine under the magnificent temple he had just erected. Alas, what is man in his best estate! Blessed be God for a greater than Solomon, one whose wisdom was never dimmed by folly, whose purity was never sullied with a stain, and whose beauty and loveliness are without spot. Adored be that grace which brought Solomon to bemoan his folly, and to cry, "Vanity of vanity." It was well to do this; but it will be better to cry constantly with David, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken Thou me in Thy way. Teach me, O Lord, the way of Thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end." This is not too much for us to expect from Him who appeared unto Solomon, and said, "Ask me what I shall give thee."

If a very rich person were thus to address you

on the morning of your birthday, would you not think yourself highly favoured? and if he had already done much for you and others, would you not feel emboldened to present your request hopefully? God, who is rich in mercy, and plenteous in goodness, from whom all angels have derived their holiness, all sinners their hopes, and all saints their happiness—God, "who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," says to you, "Ask what I shall give thee!" How have you treated His proposal? Some have taken no notice of it; others have listened, and turned away without asking anything; some have desired only temporal favours; and a few, like Solomon, have said, "Give thy servant a wise and understanding heart."

Herein Solomon manifested greater wisdom than when he discoursed on all nature's wonders, or than when he astonished the queen of Sheba with the extent of his attainments. He asked for blessings from God, suited to his age, his character, and circumstances. You will act wisely if you do the same. Consider your soul, its diseases and desires; consider the claims of God upon you,

and what is required of you by your own generation; consider yourself as hastening on to judgment and eternity, and ask accordingly. God gives you full leave to look at yourself, in all your wickedness and weakness; to consider your ignorance and insufficiency; and then to "come with boldness to a throne of grace, that you may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

The prayer of Solomon was based on humility; he acknowledged his own insufficiency. It breathed of confidence; he called to mind what God had done; recollected who He was, and cherished a firm conviction of His power and willingness. It displayed heavenly wisdom. Its tendency was to glorify God and benefit others. He sought such a divine *illumination as should enable him to act aright;* "Give thy servant a wise and understanding heart, that I may discern between good and bad." Though you have not to govern a kingdom as Solomon had, yet you have to govern yourself, and to steer your way through a world full of snares and dangers. Seek wisdom from God to discern between good and bad principles, customs, maxims, companions, and guides. Then,

having discerned between evil and good, seek grace to decide for that which is good. Pray that your will may ever follow the dictates of an enlightened judgment, and then that the affections may cleave to the object of your choice. This is the way to be preserved from fatal and serious mistakes.

Such a line of conduct is well pleasing to God. "The speech pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this thing." He gave him his desire, and He gave him many blessings beside. Thus will He deal with you. If your eye be single to His glory, your heart shall be satisfied with His blessings; God will take pleasure both in your graces and in your prosperity, and you shall find true pleasure in His service.

A PRAYER FOR DAILY USE.

CAST out, O Lord, from my poor heart,
All things wherein Thou hast no part;
And fill it, Lord, abundantly,
With all that keeps it near to THEE;
Yea, rid me of myself and sin,
That Thou alone mayest reign therein.

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE FRIEND OF SINNERS.

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise."—MATT. i. 18.

THERE is one birthday which alone can make other birthdays happy. The birth of Jesus Christ is a fountain of holiness, and thus a fountain of happiness. By it the great Jehovah comes into connection with our nature, and all who trust the Saviour are made one with God in the most tender and endearing relationship. Here, then, is a birthday theme. Here is the subject-matter for birthday rejoicing. In consequence of this great event, and what followed upon it, our immortality may become a blessing indeed. Jesus can separate sin from our nature, and lift up that nature to the most sublime pleasures and honourable employments. Then let the Saviour's incarnation be a theme of never-ceasing praise; let the song which angels sung over our fallen world be still prolonged by the redeemed dwellers thereon, until He shall come again in majesty who once came in lowliness:—

> "O day of days, shall hearts set free
> No minstrel rapture find for Thee!
> Thou art the Sun of other days,
> They live by giving back Thy rays."

How various are the circumstances under which the children of men enter upon their earthly pilgrimage! Some are tenderly received into the soft lap of plenty, and others rudely clasped by the rough hands of poverty. On some every face beams with smiles, and if a tear falls it is the tear of deep rapture and maternal tenderness, while others are born not only to weep, but to be wept over. But, though there are many points of dissimilarity in outward circumstances, in a moral point of view all are alike conceived in sin, brought forth in pain, possessed of a sinful nature. All infants are alike the seed of evil-doers, and heirs of shame, however dignified by name, or favoured by outward circumstances. There is one glorious exception to this universal rule. Let us draw near and see this great sight!

Hark! a voice sounds in our ears: "Put thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place where thou standest is holy ground." "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh." This

great event was a fulfilment of a series of prophecies and promises, extending over a period of several thousands of years. The nation and family whence the Saviour should come, the place where He should be born, were minutely foretold, and all was fulfilled to the very letter by a combination of events most wonderful.

In this birth, the divine and human natures were inseparably joined together in one person (Isa. vii. 14). "GOD WITH US!" Amazing thought! Here, indeed, is a sign both in the height and in the depth. What will not God do, now He hath done this! "God with us!" God not only in our world, by His omniscience; or in our immortal spirits, by His gracious presence; but one with us, taking our nature into personal union with Himself. "God sent forth His Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, made of a woman, made under the law."

All this was done in order to make a full, clear, and glorious revelation of God to man, and was intended to be a foundation upon which to build a beauteous superstructure of grace and glory. *Salvation through* Christ, union to Christ, fellow-

ship with Christ, and the fruition of God in Christ, all grow out of this great event for all who believe. He took our nature, that He might in that nature conquer our enemies, bear our sins, sympathise with us in our sorrows, bring God down to us, and attract us up to God. Oh most wondrous birth! The birth of mercy into a world of sin; of joy into a world of sorrow; of life into a world of death; of hope into a world of despair; of resurrection into a world of graves! "JESUS WAS BORN TO DIE!"

The preparations for this birth, in angelic ministration and divine operation, are mysterious and awe-inspiring. The circumstances attending it are deeply interesting and grand. The angel's message to Mary, the shepherds' rapture as they heard the heavenly song, and their still deeper emotion as they gazed upon the wondrous Child, the star-directed journey of the wise men, the testimony of Zechariah, the song of Simeon, are all full of heavenly beauty. Faith does not stumble at the mean stable and humble manger. She sees God manifest in the flesh, and keeps the birthday of the Saviour right joyously. The star of inspiration

hath guided her to the centre of all beauty and the source of all blessings, and she stands and sings, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

"Does God stoop down His glory to unfold,
God! deign to hold communion with a worm?
Oh let my soul with wondering awe behold
Jehovah manifest in human form!

"With wondering awe, and yet with holy joy,
My song shall tell the riches of Thy grace;
Till better praise my strengthened powers employ,
Where saints made perfect see Him face to face."

THE YOUTHFUL LOVELINESS OF THE SAVIOUR.

"When He was twelve years old."—LUKE ii. 42.

THE youth of both sexes, it may be, think as much of birthdays, when about twelve years of age, or just as they are entering their teens, as at any

time. At this age they are also capable of understanding the appeals which are made to them; and birthdays should awaken some other thoughts than how they can enjoy themselves, some other feelings than those of worldly mirth. I do not wish, dear young friends, to mar your pleasure, nor to hinder you from healthful exercise or harmless play, but I am anxious to direct you to the true fountain of happiness, by commending to you the study of the Saviour as a perfect pattern. You are almost sure to imitate those in whose company you are most frequently found; and if you ask God to give you the Holy Spirit, to lead you to the Saviour, and reveal to you His glories, then you will take pleasure in reading of Him, and thinking about Him, and will become anxious to be like Him.

Look at the Saviour when He was twelve years of age. What a childhood had His been! No waywardness, pride, or passion had disfigured His character. He had caused His mother no sorrow, never made His reputed father to shed a tear, nor given any member of the little household at Nazareth any uneasiness. He was perfectly lovely and loving.

Mark His delight in divine ordinances. "He was glad when it was said to Him, Let us go into the house of the Lord." No house to Him like God's house; no book to Him like God's book. Have you not sometimes deemed the Lord's-day to be a dull day, and thought the service long and wearisome? Have you not preferred a story-book to God's book of truth? All this shows that the heart is not right—that you do not love God.

Look at the Saviour in the midst of the learned men in the temple. He listens attentively to them, and then modestly proposes some questions. Go you and do likewise. You must listen if you would learn; you must inquire of those who can instruct you if you would grow wise. Prov. ii. 3–6.

Think of His zeal for God—"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business." He delighted much in God's character as a Father, and as *His* Father He simply depended on Him, and was sincerely devoted to Him. Here is a lesson for you. Until you depend on God, and delight in Him, you will not be devoted to Him. The revelation He has made of Himself warrants your confidence, *and should* win your affections.

The Saviour delighted to be where there was work to be done for God, and to do that work. He early found it to be His meat to do the divine will. Here He sought happiness and found it. This was the path to honour, and He trod in it. Nothing diverted Him from His course. He persevered in His beneficent career of untiring love, until, standing before the cross, He could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do."

Yet, though so glorious, though so superior to all around Him, He was meek and humble. He returned from Jerusalem with His parents, and was subject to them, labouring most probably at the humble occupation of a carpenter, while exercising every grace, and by communion with God preparing Himself for His great and glorious mission as Teacher and Saviour.

While thus employed, it is testified of Him, that "Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man." You are like Him in one respect, increasing in stature; but are you increasing in wisdom? Have you even begun to be wise? Have you fled to a sure refuge; chosen

a lasting portion? Do you love infinite beauty, and trust the only faithful Friend? Do you aim so to act as to induce others to love you? Above all, have you an interest in the favour of God? Hark to the Saviour's words, "Whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord." Jesus is the way to God; to the enjoyment of His favour, and to the possession of His image. And oh, bear in mind this fact, that you will never imitate Jesus as your pattern, until you have come to Him as a Saviour. You must submit to His righteousness, and then you will take His yoke. His cross must heal you, and His love constrain you; then you will serve Him and follow Him; and where He is, you shall also be.

If you, dear young friends, really love the Saviour, the following lines may express the feelings and desires of your heart:—

Who is that Child with lofty brow,
  And deep inquiring eye,
From whom such words of wisdom flow
  As lift the thoughts on high?
Have ye not heard the wondrous tale—
Of songs once sung o'er Bethlehem's vale?
This is the Child; spread, spread His fame,
Jesus, Immanuel! is His name.

Jesus, I love to see Thee lie
  On Thy meek mother's breast;
To view Thy helpless infancy,
  Thy sleep, so sweet and blest!
I love to see Thy virtues dawn
In happy childhood's earliest morn;
And Thou in mind dost ever bear
What a child's joys and sorrows are.

Incline my wandering heart to muse
  On Thy behaviour meek;
Teach me Thy holy path to choose,
  And Thy sweet teachings seek.
Thou still art Jesus, lowly, mild,
And Thou wilt help a little child
To find true bliss before that throne,
Where Thou so constantly didst come.

Teach me Jehovah's name to know,
  And Him my Father call;
With rapture make my bosom glow,
  Make tears of sorrow fall.
Whene'er I gaze upon that tree
Where Thou wast crucified for me,
Then raise me up to share Thy joy,
And for Thee every power employ.

THE PERFECT PATTERN.

"And Jesus Himself began to be about thirty years of age."
—LUKE iii. 23.

IF Jesus at twelve years of age furnished some useful lessons to youths upon their birthdays, surely Jesus at thirty years of age will afford a profitable study to those who celebrate their birthdays in the maturity of life. The sacred record tells us nothing concerning the Saviour's history for eighteen years. This seems mysterious to us. How very different are man's biographies of his fellow-men. God's Word says little to satisfy our curiosity, but it says much to save and sanctify our souls. We are sure that during this long interval the Saviour was perfectly holy, and we have reason, as before stated, to conclude that He was employed in manual labour. How are lowliness and labour dignified by the example of Jesus! If you are called to earn your bread by hard toil, if your lot is cast in lowly circumstances, if what you attempt to do for God is little seen, and less thought of by man, be not cast down nor dis-

couraged; be still found about your Father's business, in however humble a way; make use of every relationship and duty as a means of bringing glory to Him, and His favour shall be your satisfying portion, and His approbation your rich reward.

At thirty years of age the Saviour left the seclusion of Nazareth in order to commence His public ministry. Previous to His entering upon this great work He was baptized by John in Jordan, anointed by the Holy Spirit, and acknowledged by a voice from heaven as the beloved Son of God, on whom the divine complacence rested. How full of interest is that scene, and how full of instruction! What a manifestation was there of God! what an unfolding of the Saviour's character! what a pattern for all the brethren of Jesus! Reader, let the following questions be well pondered by you on your natal day:—

Have you received the Spirit which is of God? Those only are Christians who have "an unction from the Holy One;" for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." If you have been anointed in conformity to the Saviour,

there will be a similarity between Him and you. The same tastes and dispositions will be possessed, and the same ends kept in view. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus as a dove, to denote the tender, loving character of the Redeemer. As a dove "it *abode* upon Him;" His very being and character became instinct with love and tenderness; His nature was full of faithful affection. And the fruit of the Spirit in the saints is—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, meekness, gentleness, kindness,"—in a word, the spirit of the dove—the mind of Christ. How much is this spirit needed by us amidst the cares of life, the trials of the family, and the duties connected with the Church of God!

If you have reason to believe that you have received the Holy Spirit, *have you professed the Saviour, and declared yourself publicly on the Lord's side?* He was baptized as His people's pattern, and surely it becometh them to imitate Him by boldly professing His name, and becoming publicly identified with His cause and professing people. As to how you will do it, I would only say, search diligently the Scriptures, seek the Lord's direction,

and then act out the convictions of your mind, whatever they may be; only do not, for fear of any consequences, shrink from confessing the Saviour before men. Follow the Lord *wholly*, and fear not to own His name who bore your sins in His own body on the tree. If you *have* made a public profession, if you are associated with His people, seek grace to adorn that profession, and to become a blessing to others.

Are you realising your interest in God's paternal love? God delighted in the Saviour, and declared it, and He taketh pleasure in His people, and gives them "the spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father." Jesus was supported in His arduous self-denying work by the consciousness of His Father's eye being always upon Him, and by the assurance of an interest in His Father's love. You will need the same consolation when engaged in following the Saviour. You must expect trial and conflict, sorrow and tribulation, but the love of God shed abroad in your heart will carry you triumphantly through all.

Perhaps some professors may point to their circumstances, and tell of a mother's cares, of a father's

anxieties, and of the perplexities of business, as an excuse for declension in communion, and shrinking from service. I point such to God's claims; I ask attention to one solemn word—ETERNITY. Will you dare to weigh the claims of the world against those of the Saviour's, or the interests of time against those of eternity? Ah! little does it signify whether you are rich or poor, whether your children are accomplished or not; but it does signify whether *you* bring glory to God, and whether you seek to train *them* up for eternity. Now, while you are in the prime of life, give yourself afresh to God, and follow the Saviour closely in loving service and self-denying labour.

"My Saviour, how shall I proclaim,
How pay the mighty debt I owe?
Let all I have, and all I am,
Ceaseless to all Thy glory show.

"Too much to Thee I cannot give;
Too much I cannot do for Thee:
Let all Thy love, and all Thy grief,
Graven on my heart for ever be!"

THE ANIMATING SALUTATION.

"Grace and peace be from Jesus Christ, the first-begotten of the dead."—Rev. i. 4.

Birthdays are days of salutation. But it is not usual for persons on their birthdays to send salutations to others; they expect on such occasions to receive, and not to give. But on the day when the Saviour was born at Bethlehem, God sent a most gracious salutation to a guilty world: "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Yes, Bethlehem is a centre of joy; from it shall blessings emanate in ever-widening circles, until heaven and earth are embraced in their glorious circumference.

The Saviour had another birthday, even His glorious resurrection, when "He was declared to be the Son of God with power," when He, who was the image of the invisible God, but who had for a time been hidden in death's dark cave, came forth as a bridegroom from his chamber, "the first-begotten of the dead." O Saviour, altogether and ever wonderful! Thou, who wast in the form of God, didst make the lowly manger and

the shameful cross steps by which to rise to the highest glory; and the dark grave Thou didst use as a tiring-room, where Thou didst put on Thy garments of glory. As the Incarnate One, Thou art divinely gracious; as the Crucified One, boundless in love; as the Resurrection and the Life, infinitely glorious; in all, in everything, altogether lovely.

The friends of Jesus had buried their hopes in their Master's grave; these hopes had a glorious resurrection on that triumphant morning when He burst the bonds of death. But though hope had died, love stronger than death yet survived within their bosoms; and that love was a magnet to attract the Saviour; it was His own work, the results of His toil, the image of His Father. He, therefore, sought out these loving, yet desponding ones. What tender anxiety did He discover to draw His friends into a participation of the joy which filled His own heart, on this His second and most glorious birthday!—

> "Oh! joy to Mary first allowed,
> When roused from weeping o'er His shroud,
> By His own calm, soul-soothing tone,
> Breathing her name, as still His own."

Joy also to the other women whom the Saviour met with, "All hail!" at once dispelling their sorrows, and revealing His love. Joy to the two travellers to Emmaus, whose hearts He made to burn with rapture, as Messiah's love, sorrows, and glories stood out in bold relief, and imposing grandeur, in every part of that glorious temple of truth into which their mysterious companion introduced them. Joy to the trembling sheep who forsook Him in His hour of sorrow; among whom He stood, proclaiming peace with His own lips, and pointing to its fountain in His wounded hands and side. Joy to Peter, when the same eye that looked at him in the dark hour of his fearful backsliding, looking on him in the mild majesty of forgiving love, said, "It *is* true; I know all; I know that thou lovest me." Joy to Thomas, convinced by overwhelming evidence that Jesus really lived, and brought to confess and own the Saviour "his Lord and his God." And joy, also, to us, "who have not seen and yet believe;" for Jesus tells us that we are blessed; and we feel it is even so, while we study these "infallible proofs that He is alive after His passion."

The forty days, with all their wonders of love having passed, Jesus returned to glory; He ascended amidst the acclamations of angels to His Father's throne, where He was welcomed by paternal Deity. There the Friend of sinners, still wearing our nature, ever liveth to be the joy of heaven, and the hope of earth.

Faith *can* still see His glory and hear His voice. Hearken to His salutation, "Grace and peace be unto you." He died to procure us all blessings, He rose to ensure them, He lives to bestow them, His heart yearns to enrich us with heavenly blessings. He rose to be the great Shepherd of the sheep, and His sheep shall hear His voice. He rose to be the first-fruits of them that slept, and His people shall share His dignity. Oh, let us seek grace gratefully to receive His salutation, and lovingly to respond to it. Let us rejoice in His fulness, and live upon it. The Lord is risen, let us rise with Him. The Lord ever liveth, and we shall live also. The Lord hath grace and peace to give, "let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear."

"Risen with Him, we upward move,
Still to seek the things above,
Still pursue, and 'kiss the Son,'
Seated on His Father's throne.

"King of glory, soul of bliss,
Everlasting life is this,
Thee to know, Thy power to prove,
Thus to sing, and thus to love."

THE GREAT PROBLEM SOLVED.

"How can he be clean that is born of a woman?"—JOB xxv. 4.
"The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."—1 JOHN i. 7.

"MAN that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." Why is this? Why is the "beauteous fabric of man's body," reared by God's own hands, and watched over with such tender care, so soon cast aside like a worthless thing, and degraded to be the companion and food of worms? Why must the mourners go about the streets? and why must birthdays be the portals to dying days,

and the cradle rock us towards the grave? One word answers all questions, justifies God, humbles man, and reads a terrible lesson to the universe—SIN! Sin is the destroyer of beauty, the enemy of life, the parent of death, and the purveyor for the grave. Man is a sinner, hence the birthday and the dying day of so many of our race are close together—hence, in all cases, the one succeeds the other. Go then, man, in all thy joyousness; go, youth, while life is bounding in thy veins,—go, smite upon thy breast, and cry, "Woe is me, for I am unclean! Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Sin is within thee. The baleful poison tree is planted in thy soul, its fruit must be death—eternal death—unless thou art made clean! And "*how* can he be clean who is born of a woman!" What hand of skill can extract the cancer of sin from the soul, and make a sound cure once and for ever?

Sinner, dost thou start up alarmed? dost thou see thyself a leper, and feel that from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there is no soundness? dost thou anxiously ask, How may I be recovered from my leprosy? I reply, Behold,

Jesus of Nazareth, the great Physician, passeth by. Cry to Him, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean!" Cry constantly, cry earnestly, and He will heal thee of thy plague. Hark! He points to the fountain of His blood. Reason not, delay not, it was opened expressly for sin and uncleanness; it is of infinite efficacy to kill sin, and endow the sinner with everlasting life.

Dost thou ask, "What profit shall I have if I be cleansed from my sin?" Thou shalt come forth from the leper's loathsome prison to blessed liberty; thou shalt exchange agony for peace, fear for hope, and corruption for beauty. The breath of heaven shall fan thy late parched cheek, and the light of heaven greet thy long-dimmed eye. The sanctuary of heaven shall be opened to thee; companions from above shall greet thee; and thou, late a moral pest, shalt "come to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to the innumerable company of angels," because thou hast been to the blood of sprinkling, "the blood which cleanseth from all sin."

"What though your crimes are black as night,
Or glowing as the crimson morn?

Immanuel's blood can make them white
As snow through the pure ether borne.

"Lord, 'tis amazing grace we own,
And well may guilty worms surprise;
But was not Thy eternal Son
A most amazing sacrifice?"

A VISIT TO OUR SPIRITUAL BIRTHPLACE.

"Of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her."—PSALM lxxxvii. 5.

MOST persons feel a strong attachment to their native place. However dull or uninteresting it may appear to others, for them it has peculiar charms; to their eye it is clothed with beauties. And if removed in Providence to a distance, and years elapse before they visit the well-known spot, with what delight do they return to the scenes of their childhood, and how pleasant is their first solitary ramble over hill and dale, through the coppice, and by the brook! True, many melancholy feelings will mingle with these pleasant emotions, as recollection calls up the friends of childhood, and reviews the days which are past.

The Christian, too, loves his *spiritual* birthplace, and can never forget the spot where he first heard the Word of Life, and where, weary and heavy laden, he was led to the Saviour. He can never forget the instrument by which this great change was effected, or the pleasures of his spiritual youth, when everything in religion was novel and fresh, and when with dear young friends and companions, he found wisdom's ways pleasantness, and her paths peace.

The Church is the birthplace of the most celebrated characters, and those who have been born in her may well exult in the fact as a high honour. Some cities and towns have become celebrated in consequence of being the birthplace of poets, warriors, or statesmen; but where are such celebrated characters to be found as those which have been born in God's city? Dear reader, it is very probable that on this your birthday your thoughts have wandered to the home of your childhood; can you call to mind your spiritual birthday? Is your name written in Jerusalem above, the mother of all true believers? Are you born of God—begotten by the Word of truth to a

lively hope, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead? If so, you will bear God's image, love the truth, and your hope will have a purifying tendency. If so, you will *love your birthplace*, and seek by every means to promote its wellbeing and prosperity. Your love to the Church of God will lead you to seek *union* with God's people, and to desire communion with them. Loving Him who begat, you will love them also who are begotten of Him. You will pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and while you pray that her walls might be built, and her palaces beautified, you will labour to bring both about. By thus acting, you will prove yourself to be a true citizen of Zion; in her peace you shall have peace; and loving her you shall enjoy prosperity. And when the Lord writes up the people, He will count you as one of those born in Zion, and you shall have your deathless portion among the living in the New Jerusalem (Heb. xii. 22–24; Rev. vii. 9–17, xxi. 1–4, xxii. 1–5).

The dying Halyburton, anticipating this blessed meeting, exclaimed, "I have a father and a mother and ten brothers and sisters in heaven, and I shall

be the eleventh. Blessed be God that ever I was born." What a contrast between him and Voltaire, who, after drawing a fearful picture of human misery, thus concludes: "I wish I had never been born." The utterance of the dying saint struck a key-note for a lofty lay from that grand poet, Charles Wesley. May we be enabled also gratefully to review God's dealings, to magnify His grace, and rejoice in hope of His glory:—

"Away with our fears,
The glad morning appears,
When an heir of salvation was born;
From Jehovah I came,
For His glory I am,
And to Him I with singing return.

"Oh, the infinite cares,
And temptations and snares,
The Lord has conducted me through;
Oh, the blessings bestowed
By a bountiful God,
And the mercies eternally new.

"All honour and praise
To the Father of grace,
To the Spirit and Son I return;
The business pursue,
The Lord called me to do,
AND REJOICE THAT I EVER WAS BORN."

GRATEFUL RETROSPECTION.

"Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?"—2 SAM. vii. 18.

"I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well."—PSALM cxxxix. 14.

IT is a great blessing to have a sincere desire to meet every day with its appropriate duty. Wisdom and grace to do this must come from the Lord, and should be sought by earnest prayer. "In the day of prosperity be joyful, in the day of adversity consider." "Is any man among you afflicted? let him pray; is any merry? let him sing psalms." Most persons are inclined to be merry upon their birthdays: God has provided us with many sweet psalms to sing, and blessed are they who can make melody with them, singing with grace in their hearts unto the Lord. Before the heart can sing it must be newly strung, and tuned by a divine hand. Man's heart is naturally like a broken harp; there is the frame-work, it is true, in a somewhat worm-eaten condition; but *there* are no strings. That is, there are the natural

faculties of the soul much impaired, but the graces of the Spirit are wanting. It is only over these that the breath of heaven will condescend to blow, and bring forth melody meet for the ear of God. What is the sweetest-toned voice, or the finest constituted mind, or the highest poetic talent, if the heart remains alienated from God, or steeped in sin? Those only can join the angelic choir in heaven, who have been new born on earth. Man is born to weep and die. He is new born to sing, and live for ever. On his natural birthday his name is entered on the lists of sorrow; on his spiritual birthday he is enrolled among the sons of song. Then let those whom God hath formed for Himself, show forth His praise.

On a very memorable day in his history, "David went in and sat before the Lord;" we shall not act wisely unless we do the same. Enter, Christian, into your closet, and shut the door. There seek communion with God in the exercise of penitence, gratitude, love, and hope. Enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus; you are invited and encouraged to do so. Then shall you pour out your heart before God, you shall receive fresh

communications from God, and the Holy One of Israel will inhabit your praises.

There are certain questions which you may profitably ask yourself on such a day, and under such circumstances; begin with, "*What am I!*" The answer must be, a being "fearfully and wonderfully made." This is true, physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually. A creature curiously wrought; an immortal who can never die; a sinner who has to give an account to a Holy Judge; a believer receiving the atonement, and rejoicing in God. The various members and organs of the body, the faculties of the mind, the mysterious union between matter and spirit—their complete distinctness, yet their influence upon each other—all attest that I am fearfully and wonderfully made. A worm of the dust, yet allied to angels; a being of yesterday, yet capable of holding communion with the everlasting God; and beyond all this, privileged to look upon Him who is the brightness of His Father's glory, and claim "to be a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones," and to feel that He has given me His Spirit. When I contrast all this with what I once

was—a slave of Satan, a rebel against God; and see that an arm of Almighty power, and blood of infinite value, have made all the difference, how can I help saying, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made?"

Where am I? As a *creature*, amidst the teeming wonders of Thy creation, Thou God of goodness! Thy light cheers my eyes, sounds of harmony from all Thy works greet my ears; for the enjoyment of every sense and every faculty Thou hast richly provided. Thy universe is full of forms of sublimity and scenes of beauty, and I may gaze on all. The table of Thy providence hath been liberally spread, and from my birth to the present moment, I have been a welcome guest. No good thing hast Thou withheld from one who had forfeited all.

As an immortal being, *where* am I? Here I belong to the universe of spirit, as before to the universe of matter. I am surrounded on all sides by invisible and deathless beings. I have myriads of devils for my foes, multitudes of angels for my ministers, and the Father of spirits for my guide and defender.

As a new creature in Christ, *where am I?* In the Eden of the new covenant, and among the family of heaven. I stand among the wonders of revelation; I share the riches of redeeming mercy; I rejoice in the gifts of everlasting love. From the eminence upon which I stand, I behold the glories of eternity and the wonders of the everlasting kingdom. "Who am I, O Lord God, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?"

Marvellous are Thy works, O God; kind are Thy dealings, tender is Thy mercy, and rich Thy compassion! this my soul knoweth right well. Therefore "will I praise thee, O God," with my *body*, let it be Thy temple; with my *spirit*, let it be Thy instrument; with my *tongue*, let it be Thy herald; with my *life*, let it be Thy mirror; and let all be unceasingly employed in extolling Thy glorious name:—

"I look upon the worm, and sigh—
My brother and my peer!
Thou dost to angels point and cry,
Behold thy brethren here!

"I look upon the dust, and say—
My parent and my home!
Thou bidst me gaze on endless day,
And dwell in worlds to come!"

PENITENCE AND PRAISE.

WHILE on the covenant of grace relying,
My rock of safety, and my fount of peace;
While Jesus and His cross alone I 'm eyeing,
The world recedes, my fears and doubtings cease.

The heart is melted into soft contrition,
Yet faith can triumph o'er the sins I see;
While hope looks forward to that blest condition,
When I shall, like my Lord, in glory be!

Love triumphs in the glorious Mediator,
And sings aloud His victories and fame;
Humility much wonders that a creature
Should be enabled such rich grace to claim.

Awake, my soul, in songs of lofty praises,
And imitate the blest around the throne!
Such glorious grace my glowing heart surprises,
I long such wondrous love with praise to crown!

Ye saints, who know the pangs of holy sorrow,
Who know the joys produced by pardoning grace;
Oh, could I all your hearts and voices borrow,
All were inadequate such grace to praise!

In mercy, Lord, accept a sinner's lispings,
So in my thanks shall Thy compassion shine;
And soon Thy grace shall change these feeble whisperings
To praises everlasting and sublime!

THE FORGOTTEN RACE.

WHEN, in the midst of forests which were thought to have existed from the time of the deluge, the traveller suddenly comes upon the ruins of magnificent structures, and finds himself a lonely man where once a busy crowd thronged the streets of a vast city, how solemn are his thoughts! He naturally inquires concerning the name of the lost race, their history, and the cause of their extinction; but there is no reply. They are not only lost, but forgotten. Surely man walketh in a vain show, and in his best estate is altogether vanity!

How affecting, also, is it to walk where the dead repose, and to think of those who slumber beneath! If the place haslong been devoted to this solemn *purpose,* and is thickly sown with dust once ani-

mated, the humbling thought steals over the mind, how completely are the far greater part of these sleepers entirely forgotten! Past generations; who remembers them? They had their birthdays, and kept them in the midst of joyous circles; they had also their dying days, and were mourned over; but of when they were born, where they died, and how they lived, nothing is now known. They once joyed and sorrowed; loved, and were loved again; their heads planned, their hearts grieved; but no record remains behind of all these things. Some, it is true, have a monument which preserves their *names* a little while on earth, and others have a rude and crumbling memorial placed over their sleeping dust; but the moss has overgrown it, and the teeth of time are fast gnawing the wood or stone to pieces, and if, after much painstaking, the *name* is deciphered, still the question returns, "*Who* was he?" and there is no answer!

"Of countless millions that have been,
No record lives, no trace is seen;
Yet earth is green, the heavens are blue,
As they with death had naught to do.

> "And now I live, and breathe, and move,
> Life with its wondrous power to prove;
> Awake to knowledge of things past
> In life—a life not long to last.
>
> "Revolving this; to ear, heart, eye,
> Mysterious seems it man should die;
> So like a god in soul supreme,
> Yet evanescent as a dream."

Oh, it is humbling to contemplate how oblivion swallows up the names and memories of men almost as fast as eternity receives their souls. Man strives to prevent this, but it cannot be altered. God's word is verified: "What is your life? it is even a vapour which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Men build houses, make roads, plant trees, and call them after their own names, and now those who dwell in the houses, who pass along the roads, or who admire the flourishing plantations, know not why such names were given to these various objects. The pyramids still stand. They were intended by the builder to keep his name in everlasting remembrance; there they stand, and the wondering traveller asks these huge piles, with their mysterious chambers and curious sculptures, "Who built you?" but they reply not. A few only

of the sons of men are remembered. Thousands of millions have lived and died, and been forgotten. A few solitary memories still float on that great ocean which has swallowed up all beside, and of these comparative few, some are remembered only by their crimes. They are rotting above ground.

> "Exalted o'er their less abhorred compeers,
> They fester in the infamy of years."

These facts, so saddening to the proud heart of man, do not distress the Christian. His witness is in heaven, his record is on high. His name is written in a book which can never be worm-eaten, and engraved on the breast of the living ONE. He is a citizen of the New Jerusalem, none of whose inhabitants shall be forgotten, however little they may be known on earth. Be not anxious, then, Christian, about earthly fame; seek the honour which cometh from God only. You are now a son of God. What matters it, then, that the world knows you not? it knew not the Lord. Your life is hid with Christ in God. The world knows not the source of your pleasures, nor the nature of your principles. "Christ, your life, shall soon appear,

and then you shall appear with Him in glory." Be, then, if the Lord so appoints it—

> "Content to live on earth unknown,
> Till Christ your Lord appear."

Fellow-immortal! there is only one way to lasting fame,—it is *to be identified with Christ.* Once united to Jesus, your name, your interests are associated with, or rather merged in His. The poor woman, who went to His feet with her tears of penitence and offering of gratitude, and Zaccheus, who received the Saviour joyfully into his house, little thought that they were laying the foundation of eternal fame; but so it was. Go to Jesus, cast yourself at His feet, and "though a mother may forget her sucking child, He will never forget you." When Paul and Barnabas hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts xv. 26), they did not do it to be remembered; but so it is, and so it shall be, with all who, having been saved by Jesus, desire to serve Him. When the deeds of conquerors, the reigns of monarchs, the discoveries of genius shall pass into oblivion, those who ministered to Christ's cause from a principle

of love, and with a feeling of humility, shall be held in everlasting remembrance. To all such He will say, "*Ye did it unto me.* Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world."

"All the pale-horsed king obey,
Ancient fathers, where are they?
Prophets who events foreshow,
Do they live for ever? No!

"'Midst this mighty wreck of things,
What are heroes, warriors, kings?
What is man, alas! I sigh;
What a shadow, Lord, am I!"

"Hark, the judgment trumpet calls,
Soul, rebuild thy house of clay;
Immortality thy walls,
And eternity thy day!"

THE GREAT BIRTHDAY.

"The last day."—JOHN vi. 39.

THE "last" of anything is frequently very affecting. The last look of dear friends leaving us for ever; the last visit to a dear and well-remembered

spot, with one who is now for ever gone; the last birthday we spent with *some beloved friend*, are all of this nature.

But "THE last day," when rightly pondered, casts every other day into the shade. It will be well if we so contemplate it as to be stirred up to make use of every day aright as it passes on, for it is the relation of the last day to previous days which invests it with such unspeakable importance. It is the harvest-day, but the days now passing over us are sowing days, and whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. Sow, then, in righteousness, if you would reap in mercy. Each day live near the cross, and live to Him who died upon it, and the last day will be to you *a glorious birthday.*

From the grave a new body shall come forth for your sinless spirit to inhabit. It will be a spiritual body, the work of redeeming love and power, "fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body." Then will be the day of open adoption, when you shall be publicly owned as a child of God among the children of the resurrection. A new world shall then be born for you to inherit, "a new

heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" for He that sitteth on the throne will say, "Behold I make all things new." Life will triumph, and there shall be no more death. Blessedness shall flow in rivers from the throne of God and the Lamb, and "there shall be no more curse." Pleasures, sublime and tender, shall be everywhere, and sorrow nowhere, "for there shall be no more pain, neither sorrow nor crying." Then shall every wish be fulfilled, and every sorrow satisfied.

But, reader, if you have never been born again, the last day will be *a dreadful birthday* to you. It will be the birthday of despair and anguish, which will never die. On that day things will appear in their true light. Truth will be seen in its importance—Mercy in its adaptation—Christ in His sufficiency—Holiness in its beauty—Hell in its terribleness. It will be a demonstrating day. That day will be God's loud *Amen* to His own word. Oh, bear in mind, that whatever will be demonstrated then is declared now, and that the things relating to God, the soul, and eternity, are as true *now* as they will be *then*, and that they *are* as important now as they will *appear* to be then. Why, then,

trifle with that truth "to-day," which will appear so unspeakably important on "the last day?" "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." The last day is not yet come; but it is coming, and hasteth quickly; therefore "to-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." On this your birthday, God pleads with you, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me?" It may be the last birthday you may have to commemorate on earth; how terrible the thought of spending the next in hell, wishing yourself out of existence! Why should it be so, when Jesus says, "This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day?" Why should it be so, when, as on "the last day, that great day of the feast," Jesus still cries, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink?"

"O sinner, little dost thou know
The tenderness of love,
With which that eye is fixed on thee,
Now looking from above."

THE BENEDICTION.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—MATT. v. 3.

WHILE receiving the greetings of kind friends, and enjoying much happiness in their society, the great question after all is, Whom does God greet with a blessing on their birthday? Over whom, as time rolls rapidly by, does the Saviour graciously bend with *His* infinite benediction, and with whom does the Holy Comforter make His abode? The answer to these questions must be, THE HUMBLE! To comfort such the Saviour was anointed (Isa. lxi. 1, 2). The great God commissioned Him to come into the world to make proud sinners humble, then to lift them up; and right well does He perform the work entrusted to Him. It will form a profitable birthday employment to study His descriptions of humility, and His declarations concerning those who possess it.

He tells us that its *seat* is in the *spirit*. It is inward and real, not external and feigned. It is easy to use words expressive of humility, or to

appear humble in garb or demeanour for a time, in order to attain some worldly end. Humble words are sometimes used by a proud heart, as a bait wherewith to angle for praise; and a voluntary humility is put on in order to gain the high places of the earth. Real humility is heart humility; it courts not the observation of man. It seeks nearness to God, and yet ever hides its face in the presence of His mercy and majesty. This lowliness of spirit is an evidence of the efficiency of divine teachings; for the spirit now humbled was once proud and independent.

The poor in spirit must be distinguished from the spiritually poor, and the poor spirited. Though poor in spirit, yet such are rich (Rev. ii. 9). True, they have nothing good in themselves considered, but they have all things in Christ, in whom they are complete. They are rich in faith, rich in holy joys, and in heavenly hopes. Their humility is accompanied with true dignity, and a consciousness of spiritual greatness, which preserves from grovelling pursuits and mean actions.

What pains does the Lord take to make and keep His people humble; what exceeding great

and precious promises has He made to them; and with what pleasure does He testify in His word to the character and memory of the humble! Let these facts attest its value, and stir us up to seek grace to be humble believers, humble workers, humble adorers, and, if the Lord so will it, humble sufferers.

But the words of the Saviour exhibit the value of this grace, and the happiness of those who possess it. The blessed ONE of God pronounces them blessed. The Heir of all promises them a kingdom. What a birthday benediction and gift have we here! Such are happy and rich indeed. Their privileges are great, their prospects glorious. The reign of God is set up in their hearts. The benediction of the Infinitely Blessed One is ever over them. The riches and honours of an eternal kingdom are theirs, and the happiness which flows from contemplations on God, and communications from Him, is ever ensured to them. Their blessedness shuts out all evil, and includes all good. It is spiritual, heavenly, and eternal. They are delivered from those desires which only end in disappointment, and from that worldly sorrow which

worketh death. They are nothing, and they know it. Christ is all, and they rejoice in Him as *their* all. Reader, are you commemorating your birthday as one of God's pensioners; confessing your poverty, confiding in His promise, and contemplating, with holy complacency, His gracious character? Then, ALL HAIL! However lowly your lot, however solitary your condition or trying your circumstances, all hail! Blessedness is upon you, a kingdom is before you, and God is for you. Yet a little while and the great birthday shall come—the birthday of perfect knowledge, spotless holiness, and ever-glowing, ever-increasing love. Till then, dear reader, may happiness fill your heart, holiness adorn your character; and, as a sure preservative of joy and antidote against sin, may you *be clothed with humility.* And when your work and warfare are ended, and your birthday is no longer kept on earth, of you may it in truth be said,—

> "He lived a debtor to God's grace,
> Rejoiced in sin forgiven,
> Died in his Father's kind embrace,
> And fled from earth to heaven."

THE BEST BIRTHDAY ORNAMENT.

"Be clothed with humility."—1 PET. v. 5.

MY soul, on this thy natal day,
Attend to what the Lord doth say:
"If you real happiness would see,
Be clothed with true humility.

"Behold my throne—how grand, how high!
There loftiest angels lowest lie;
Thither the humble soul may come,
And find a safe and happy home.

"Behold my well-beloved *One*,
My humble, My exalted Son!
Let all who claim His name to wear,
His lowly spirit seek to share.

"Behold His Cross—He stooped to this,
To raise the humble soul to bliss;
But first that Cross man's pride must slay,
And teach him *humbly* to obey.

"Behold the pit where late you lay—
Helpless, accursed, to hell a prey;
Mine arm salvation brought to thee,
Then Mine let all the glory be!

"Behold your heart—how weak, how v
What evils yet uncured remain !
Lay low, nor tempt Me to depart,
I only keep the humble heart.

"Behold your path—and blush with sh
How little have you owned My name ;
Where is thy ground to boast ? Oh wh
Shun pride—but trembler—ne'er despa

"Behold your crown—your harp—you
All ye who Jesu's name have known—
These are My gifts divinely free,
To fill you with humility."

GOD'S PROMISES AND OUR BIRTH

IMMEDIATELY on writing down the abov
few solemn words flashed on the mind, "
speaketh from heaven." How often is that
friends lost sight of in a crowd ? how freq
His gentle voice drowned by the din of t
or even by the utterances of human love
not be so with you on this your birthday
You do not turn away from the voice o

affection; and will you do so as regards the words of redeeming love? Friends on earth get a response from you, and will you not say to Him who speaketh from heaven, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek?" He speaks in faithful warnings, loving invitations, and precious promises. If His warnings have alarmed you, and His invitations allured you, then to you all the promises belong. And what an ALL! You may not only turn to the following pages, and find out what is the promise for *your* birthday, but you may come, morning by morning, as the year rolls round, and gather a potful of manna for each day; with it enter the holiest above, and, worshipping at the mercy-seat, basking in the glory, sing: "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." You may cast your eye over this large casket of heavenly jewels, and sing—

> "'Tis mine, the covenant of His love,
> And EVERY PROMISE, mine!"

If such is your happy case, you may well be congratulated. Whatever your position or prospects in this world may be, the "lines have fallen to you in pleasant places; you have a goodly heritage."

But is it so? Ever bear in mind that union to Christ alone gives a title to the promises. "They are all yea and amen IN HIM," and you must be "IN HIM" before you can claim them, and use them. The promises have been compared to the wedding-ring, but Christ is the bridegroom. That ring sparkles with many gems of inestimable value and beauty; the infinite Lover of souls will put it upon every one who takes HIM for Saviour and Lord. Receive Him, and the treasures of eternity are yours. All things are yours if you are Christ's. The near kinsman of Naomi desired her land, but would not be united to the stranger maiden of Moab. Thus many wish to be interested in the promises, who are not willing to give themselves to Christ. If it has been so with the reader; if birthdays have passed on, year after year, and heaven's recording angel has still written against the name, "*Out of Christ—without God and without hope in the world;*" yet still a voice is heard saying, "*Come unto Me;*" "all things are ready, come ye to the marriage." "COME NOW!" Why should not your natural birthday be also the spiritual birthday of the soul? Listen; and a

little child shall lead you. A good man, deeply engaged in his study, heard a gentle tapping at the door; he did not go at first, but the appeal continuing, he opened the door. There stood his youngest son, looking up, appealingly. "Well, my little boy, what do you come for?" said the father. "Me come—*to be in.*" Who could resist *that?* He got *in,* nestled down near his father, and felt very happy. Come you, *to be in;* and Him to whom you come, will "*in no wise* cast out." Then, in what a safe, blessed, exalted position will you find yourself! If you are ever so poor in this world, the treasures of eternity are now yours. If you are an orphan, with no mother's love or father's pity to solace you, "the Lord will take you up;" in Him "the fatherless findeth mercy;" yea, you will become a "joint-heir with Christ." Then it may be said to you, Lift up thine eyes, thou child of Abraham, and see if thou canst count those stars of promise, which are all thy own for ever.

The reader would do well not only to read the short texts given, but also to turn to the holy book, and study each promise or declaration in its own connection.

January.

1. All things work together for good to them that love God. Rom. viii. 28.
2. Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me. Ps. l. 15.
3. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee. Ps. lv. 22.
4. O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee. Ps. lxxxiv. 12.
5. I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. Ps. xxxii. 8.
6. Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matt. xxviii. 20.
7. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Matt. xxi. 22.
8. Our sufficiency is of God. 2 Cor. iii. 5.
9. Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? John xi. 40.
10. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. Hos. vi. 3.
11. I am the Lord thy God, which teacheth thee to profit. Isa. xlviii. 17.
12. These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. John xvi. 33.
13. I will come again, and receive you unto myself. John xiv. 3.
14. Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. Gal. v. 16.
15. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make *you free*. John viii. 32.

January.

16. With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. Isa. xii. 3.
17. I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not. Luke xxii. 32.
18. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Isa. xl. 29.
19. I will be as the dew unto Israel. Hos. xiv. 5.
20. The righteous also shall hold on his way. Job xvii. 9.
21. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. Rev. ii. 10.
22. Faithful is he who calleth you, who also will do it. 1 Thess. v. 24.
23. The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me. Ps. cxxxviii. 8.
24. One shall say, I am the Lord's. Isa. xliv. 5.
25. But my God shall supply all your need. Phil. iv. 19.
26. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation. James i. 12.
27. Be not dismayed; for I am thy God. Isa. xli. 10.
28. I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. Gen. xv. 1.
29. My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. Exod. xxxiii. 14.
30. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. Col. iii. 4.
31. The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself. Ps. iv. 3.

February.

1. I will rejoice over them to do them good. Jer. xxxii. 41.
2. The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. 2 Thess. iii. 3.
3. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. Ps. cxxi. 7.
4. The Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me. John xvi. 27.
5. I will make all my goodness pass before thee. Exod. xxxiii. 19.
6. The eternal God is thy refuge. Deut. xxxiii. 27.
7. If God be for us, who can be against us. Rom. viii. 31.
8. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him. Ps. ciii. 17.
9. I will call her beloved, which was not beloved. Rom. ix. 25.
10. Thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help. Hos. xiii. 9.
11. God is able to make all grace abound toward you. 2 Cor. ix. 8.
12. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. Heb. iv. 9.
13. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. Heb. xiii. 8.
14. Thou shalt not be forgotten of Me. Isa. xliv. 21.

February.

15. Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out. John vi. 37.
16. Because I live, ye shall live also. John xiv. 19.
17. Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you. John xiv. 27.
18. The promise of life which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim. i. 1.
19. Behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you. Prov. i. 23.
20. He will guide you into all truth. John xvi. 13.
21. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Josh. i. 5.
22. He will speak peace unto His people. Ps. lxxxv. 8.
23. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you. Isa. lxvi. 13.
24. Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Heb. x. 17.
25. Thy comforts delight my soul. Ps. xciv. 19.
26. He will be our guide even unto death. Ps. xlviii. 14.
27. He shall enter into peace. Isa. lvii. 2.
28. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. Isa. xl. 31.
29. They that seek the Lord understand all things. Prov. xxviii. 5.

March.

1. Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness. Ps. cxii. 4.
2. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matt. xi. 28.
3. I am the Lord that healeth thee. Exod. xv. 26.
4. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler. Ps. xci. 3.
5. I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you. Isa. xlvi. 4.
6. Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him. Ps. xxxiii. 18.
7. He satisfieth the longing soul. Ps. cvii. 9.
8. The Lord shall be thy confidence. Prov. iii. 26.
9. He preserveth the souls of His saints. Ps. xcvii. 10.
10. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will shew them His covenant. Ps. xxv. 14.
11. As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy. Gal. vi. 16.
12. My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, saith the Lord. Jer. xxxi. 34.
13. He shall save His people from their sins. Matt. i. 21.
14. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Heb. x. 14.
15. Much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. Rom. v. 10.

March.

16. I will be a Father unto you. 2 Cor. vi. 18.
17. He hath made us accepted in the beloved. Eph. i. 6.
18. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee. Job xxii. 27.
19. The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. 1 John i. 7.
20. I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely. Hos. xiv. 4.
21. I will deliver him, and honour him. Ps. xci. 15.
22. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him. Ps. cxlv. 19.
23. If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it. John xiv. 14.
24. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. James v. 16.
25. Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee. Ps. lxxxiv. 5.
26. O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee. Ps. lxxxiv. 12.
27. And I will give them an heart to know Me. Jer. xxiv. 7.
28. They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced. Zech. xii. 10.
29. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness. John viii. 12.
30. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel. Ps. lxxiii. 24.
31. Thou shalt be called, sought out. Isa. lxii. 12.

April.

1. And the Lord shall guide thee continually. Isa. lviii. 11.
2. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. Ps. xxiii. 2.
3. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. Ps. xxiii. 6.
4. A seed shall serve Him. Ps. xxii. 30.
5. So the Lord alone did lead him. Deut. xxxii. 12.
6. Thou hast dealt well with Thy servant, O Lord, according unto Thy word. Ps. cxix. 65.
7. Their soul shall be as a watered garden. Jer. xxxi. 12.
8. My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, saith the Lord. Jer. xxxi. 14.
9. For I will restore health unto thee. Jer. xxx. 17.
10. Fear not: for I am with thee. Isa. xliii. 5.
11. I, even I, am He that comforteth you. Isa. li. 12.
12. My grace is sufficient for thee. 2 Cor. xii. 9.
13. The Lord will bless His people with peace. Ps. xxix. 11.
14. I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing. Gen. xii. 2.
15. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? Gen. xviii. 14.
16. I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. Gen. xxviii. 15.

April.

17. God giveth grace unto the humble. James iv. 6.
18. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up. James iv. 10.
19. The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree. Ps. xcii. 12.
20. There shall no evil befall thee. Ps. xci. 10.
21. I will set him on high, because he hath known My name. Ps. xci. 14.
22. As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you. John xv. 9.
23. I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter. John xiv. 16.
24. He shall glorify Me. John xvi. 14.
25. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. John xvi. 24.
26. Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest. Ps. xciv. 12.
27. I the God of Israel will not forsake them. Isa. xli. 17.
28. A bruised reed shall He not break. Isa. xlii. 3.
29. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee. Isa. xliii. 2.
30. I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake. Isa. xliii. 25.

May.

1. The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him. 2 Chron. xv. 2.
2. The inward man is renewed day by day. 2 Cor. iv. 16.
3. God is not ashamed to be called their God. Heb. xi. 16.
4. God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Heb. xi. 6.
5. He had respect unto the recompence of the reward. Heb. xi. 26.
6. He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee. Deut. xxxi. 8.
7. He loveth him that followeth after righteousness. Prov. xv. 9.
8. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul. Lam. iii. 24.
9. The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him. Lam. iii. 25.
10. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. Lam. iii. 27.
11. Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies. Ps. ciii. 4.
12. The Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting. Ps. c. 5.
13. Light is sown for the righteous. Ps. xcvii. 11.
14. He will regard the prayer of the destitute. Ps. cii. 17.
15. The God of Jacob is our refuge. Ps. xlvi. 11.

May.

16. Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you. 1 Pet. v. 7.
17. Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. 1 Pet. i. 5.
18. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Matt. x. 30.
19. Give, and it shall be given unto you. Luke vi. 38.
20. I will make an everlasting covenant with you. Isa. lv. 3.
21. Your labour is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor. xv. 58.
22. I will put My fear in their hearts. Jer. xxxii. 40.
23. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Heb. xiii. 5.
24. I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not. Isa. xlii. 16.
25. And I will put my Spirit within you. Ezek. xxxvi. 27.
26. O taste and see that the Lord is good. Ps. xxxiv. 8.
27. There is no want to them that fear Him. Ps. xxxiv. 9.
28. He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about. Ps. xxxii. 10.
29. The Lord shall give that which is good. Ps. lxxxv. 12.
30. Thou, Lord, hast holpen me, and comforted me. Ps. lxxxvi. 17.
31. His soul shall dwell at ease. Ps. xxv. 13.

June.

1. Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfo me. Ps. xxiii. 4.
2. The meek shall eat and be satisfied. Ps. xxii. 26.
3. Thou hast been my help; leave me not. Ps. xxvii. 9.
4. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thin heart. Ps. xxvii. 14.
5. His name shall be called Wonderful. Isa. ix. 6.
6. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid. Isa. xii. 2.
7. He will swallow up death in victory. Isa. xxv. 8.
8. For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. Rom. x. 12.
9. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Rom. xiii. 12.
10. Whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. Rom. xiv. 8.
11. I have seen his ways, and will heal him. Isa. lvii. 18.
12. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree. Isa. lv. 13.
13. With great mercies will I gather thee. Isa. liv. 7.
14. My kindness shall not depart from thee. Isa. liv. 10.
15. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. Isa. liii. 10.
16. Thou shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel. Isa. xli. 16.

June.

17. Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace. Isa. lv. 12.
18. I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice. John xvi. 22.
19. If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death. John viii. 51.
20. Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. Isa. xlv. 17.
21. Righteousness delivereth from death. Prov. x. 2.
22. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Phil. i. 21.
23. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. John xi. 25.
24. Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation. Heb. ix. 28.
25. The days of thy mourning shall be ended. Isa. lx. 20.
26. The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light. Isa. lx. 19.
27. When He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. 1 John iii. 2.
28. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Matt. xiii. 43.
29. Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. Matt. xiv. 27.
30. The Lord will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom. 2 Tim. iv. 18.

July.

1. I will both search my sheep, and seek them out. Ezek. xxxiv. 11.
2. I will raise up for them a plant of renown. Ezek. xxxiv. 29.
3. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper. Isa. liv. 17.
4. They shall be my people, and I will be their God. Jer. xxiv. 7.
5. Do not My words do good to him that walketh uprightly? Micah ii. 7.
6. He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us. Micah vii. 19.
7. He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness. Micah vii. 9.
8. I will wait for the God of my salvation. Micah vii. 7.
9. The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him. Nahum i. 7.
10. With God all things are possible. Mark x. 27.
11. Be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee. Mark x. 49.
12. Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. Mark x. 52.
13. I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved. John x. 9.
14. I am come that they might have life. John x. 10.
15. I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish. John x. 28.
16. When His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 1 Pet. iv. 13.

July.

17. The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom. vi. 23.
18. And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life. 1 John ii. 25.
19. He that believeth on Him shall not be confounded. 1 Pet. ii. 6.
20. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Rom. x. 4.
21. The just shall live by faith. Heb. x. 38.
22. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. John xx. 29.
23. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up. Job xxii. 23.
24. Be ye strong therefore, for your work shall be rewarded. 2 Chron. xv. 7.
25. To him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God. Ps. l. 23.
26. He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. 1 John ii. 17.
27. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love. John xv. 10.
28. Let them that love Him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. Judges v. 31.
29. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Ps. xxxvii. 3.
30. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Ps. xxxvii. 4.
31. The Lord preserveth all them that love Him. Ps. cxlv. 20.

August.

1. Those that seek me early shall find me. Prov. viii. 17.
2. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Eph. vi. 24.
3. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him. Ps. ii. 12.
4. The Lord hath been mindful of us: He will bless us. Ps. cxv. 12.
5. He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great. Ps. cxv. 13.
6. Call unto Me, and I will answer thee. Jer. xxxiii. 3.
7. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Jas. iv. 8.
8. Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee. Job xxii. 21.
9. If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.
10. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. Rev. xxi. 6.
11. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. Ps. lxxxi. 10.
12. Your heart shall live that seek God. Ps. lxix. 32.
13. The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek Him. Ezra viii. 22.
14. Pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. Matt. vi. 6.
15. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Matt. v. 6.
16. *It is* time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you. Hosea x. 12.

August.

17. If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself. Prov. ix. 12.
18. In Thee the fatherless findeth mercy. Hosea xiv. 3.
19. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. Rom. x. 17.
20. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy. Rev. i. 3.
21. He that overcometh shall inherit all things. Rev. xxi. 7.
22. Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound. Ps. lxxxix. 15.
23. In Thy favour our horn shall be exalted. Ps. lxxxix. 17.
24. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him. Ps. lxxxix. 33.
25. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. Ps. xix. 8.
26. He that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded. Prov. xiii. 13.
27. The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide. Ps. xxxvii. 31.
28. With Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light. Ps. xxxvi. 9.
29. For Thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt Thou compass him as with a shield. Ps. v. 12.
30. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord: Thy blessing is upon Thy people. Selah. Ps. iii. 8.
31. Mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good. Prov. xiv. 22.

September.

1. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness: those that remember Thee in Thy ways. Isa. lxiv. 5.
2. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments. Rev. xvi. 15.
3. Happy is the man that feareth alway. Prov. xxviii. 14.
4. He that walketh with wise men shall be wise. Prov. xiii. 20.
5. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Matt. v. 9.
6. For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen. 2 Cor. i. 20.
7. A faithful man shall abound with blessings. Prov. xxviii. 20.
8. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Matt. v. 4.
9. Godliness with contentment is great gain. 1 Tim. vi. 6.
10. If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. Rom. viii. 13.
11. To be spiritually minded is life and peace. Rom. viii. 6.
12. Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. Rom. vi. 14.
13. By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Rom. v. 19.
14. The meek will He guide in judgment: and the meek will He teach His way. Ps. xxv. 9.

September.

15. Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Matt. v. 3.
16. Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Gal. vi. 9.
17. He that endureth to the end shall be saved. Matt. x. 22.
18. For the Lord preserveth the faithful. Ps. xxxi. 23.
19. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Ps. xci. 1.
20. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Matt. v. 8.
21. There shall no evil happen to the just. Prov. xii. 21.
22. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself. Prov. xi. 25.
23. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. Ps. xxx. 5.
24. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation. Ps. xci. 16.
25. For He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul. Ps. cix. 31.
26. When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. Prov. xvi. 7.
27. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace. Luke vii. 50.
28. Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me. Isa. xxvii. 5.
29. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Matt. v, 7.
30. So shall we ever be with the Lord. 1 Thess. iv. 17.

October.

1. If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him. 2 Tim. ii. 11.
2. I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people. Heb. viii. 10.
3. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Heb. x. 37.
4. But the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. 1 Pet. i. 25.
5. Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors. Ps. cxix. 24.
6. And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. Rev. xxii. 4.
7. According to your faith be it unto you. Matt. ix. 29.
8. Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage. Ps. cxix. 54.
9. Let me fall now into the hand of the Lord; for very great are His mercies. 1 Chron. xxi. 13.
10. The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. Ps. cxix. 72.
11. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Matt. v. 5.
12. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Ps. cxxii. 6.
13. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. Ps. cxxi. 5.
14. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope. Ps. cxxx. 5.
15. Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Prov. xxx. 5.

October.

16. God giveth to a man that is good in His sight, wisdom, and knowledge, and joy. Eccl. ii. 26.
17. As thy days, so shall thy strength be. Deut. xxxiii. 25.
18. Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Eccl. xi. 1.
19. Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Eccl. ix. 7.
20. How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Ps. cxix. 103.
21. Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them. Ps. cxix. 165.
22. The Almighty maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole. Job v. 18.
23. The God of heaven, He will prosper us. Nehem. ii. 20.
24. What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Ps. viii. 4.
25. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. Ps. xvi. 6.
26. I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness. Ps. xvii. 15.
27. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Luke xii. 32.
28. Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Luke xii. 43.
29. Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance. Matt. xxv. 29.
30. There shall not an hair of your head perish. Luke xxi. 18.
31. Be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Acts xxvii. 25.

November.

1. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you. xii. 13.
2. I will accept you with your sweet savour. xx. 41.
3. A man shall be as an hiding place from the win xxxii. 2.
4. He will keep the feet of His saints. 1 Sam. ii. 9.
5. He shall pray unto God, and He will be favourab him. Job. xxxiii. 26.
6. He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of Isa. xxx. 19.
7. The Lord will not forsake His people for His great sake. 1 Sam. xii. 22.
8. He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, in all things. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.
9. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of Ps. i. 3.
10. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, w will shew to you to-day. Exod. xiv. 13.
11. The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, in times of trouble. Ps. ix. 9.
12. I have trusted in Thy mercy; my heart shall re Thy salvation. Ps. xiii. 5.
13. In returning and rest shall ye be saved. Isa. xxx.
14. Thou wilt shew me the path of life. Ps. xvi. 11.
15. I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh u Ps. xl. 17.

November.

16. There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat. Exod. xxv. 22.
17. The Word of the Lord is tried: He is a buckler to all them that trust in Him. 2 Sam. xxii. 31.
18. The good will of Him that dwelt in the bush. Deut. xxxiii. 16.
19. David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. 1 Sam. xxx. 6.
20. They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. Ps. xxxiv. 10.
21. The Lord will command His loving-kindness in the day-time. Ps. xlii. 8.
22. Do as Thou hast said. 2 Sam. vii. 25.
23. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart. Ps. xxxiv. 18.
24. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment. Rev. iii. 5.
25. Hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways. Prov. viii. 32.
26. God hath spoken in His holiness; I will rejoice. Ps. lx. 6.
27. He shall come to be glorified in His saints. 2 Thess. i. 10.
28. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne. Rev. iii. 21.
29. Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters. Isa. xxxii. 20.
30. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. Acts xvi. 31.

December.

1. Let Thy word, I pray Thee, be verified. 1 Kings viii. 26.
2. Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in Thee. Ps. xxxiii. 22.
3. The wise shall inherit glory. Prov. iii. 35.
4. Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. Jude i. 2.
5. Rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Luke xii. 31.
6. Oh how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee. Ps. xxxi. 19.
7. The Lord will give grace and glory. Ps. lxxxiv. 11.
8. Glory ye in His holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. 1 Chron. xvi. 10.
9. And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee. Ps. xxxix. 7.
10. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. John xiv. 18.
11. Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. 1 Tim. iv. 8.
12. Exceeding great and precious promises. 2 Pet. i. 4.
13. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise. 2 Pet iii. 9.
14. Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts sha be established. Prov. xvi. 3.
15. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do tl day. Isa. xxxviii. 19.
16. O Lord, how great are Thy works! and Thy thoughts very deep. Ps. xcii. 5.

December.

17. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Isa. xxvi. 4.
18. By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, and honour, and life. Prov. xxii. 4.
19. Thou art near, O Lord; and all Thy commandments are truth. Ps. cxix. 151.
20. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Matt. xxv. 21.
21. Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice. Ps. lxiii. 7.
22. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. Prov. iii. 6.
23. Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear Thy name. Ps. lxi. 5.
24. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. Heb. xiii. 14.
25. God, according to His promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus. Acts xiii. 23.
26. The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Heb. xiii. 6.
27. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. 2 Chron. xvi. 9.
28. Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means. 2 Thess. iii. 16.
29. God, even our own God, shall bless us. Ps. lxvii. 6.
30. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand for ever. Isa. xl. 8.
31. Go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days. Dan. xii. 13.

THE FAMILY REGISTER, AND THE AUTOGRAPHS OF FRIENDS.

In the previous pages, an effort has been made to speak some words of counsel and comfort to various classes on birthday occasions. Then the writer has stood aside in order for God to speak; "day unto day has uttered speech" expressive of infinite love and fatherly care. It is a great pleasure to a writer, conscious of many imperfections in his productions, to be able to turn to any part of his book and say: *That is perfect; there is no fault there.* This can only be said when we are simply transcribers of God's own truth. The excellent John Newton used to say, "That many books were like copper coin; very good, but a great deal of it did not amount to much. There are," he said, "some silver books, and a few golden ones; but there is one book of bank-notes always available for faith." May the reader have grace to use aright these invaluable "*notes.*" They may be presented again and again at the Throne of grace. God's cheques will never get out of date, and will

never be dishonoured, seeing all are signed by "the hand that was nailed to the Cross."

The author having done his part, a few blank pages are added for the hand of affection to write upon. Here the list of family names, whether few or many, whether only just begun, or extending to children's children, may be enrolled. Here also friends may sign their names, with the day of their birth (and year too), if they please; and thus this little birthday manual will gather fresh interest around it as years roll on.

The author has never been a collector of autographs—he has had little time for that—but he has preserved the autographs of many dear friends, having taken them from letters received. (He advises others to do the same. Few things excite in him such mingled feelings as casting the eye over page after page of these signatures. Not a few of the writers are now safe at home.

It cannot be very long before the hand now writing must also be quiet in the grave. God grant that these simple pages may be used by the good Spirit to guide some into, and others along, the way everlasting.

Birthday Musings.

"Swiftly time passes! birthdays come and go,
Marking as milestones all our path below;
We've scarcely paused, and pondered on the last,
Than it seems numbered with the many past.
Each year looks shorter as we journey on,
And changes whisper, 'Time will soon be gone;'
What may be in the future, who can tell?
We trust His love who doeth all things well;
Dark clouds may gather, and o'ercast our sky,
Yet through the gloom that love we can descry.

"O'er all the past, we trace His tender care,
And faith assures, His love we still shall share;
Then, tho' the balmy morn of youth has flown,
And summer joy, and sunshine too, have gone,
Autumn has treasures—and amid seared leaves,
We find rich fruit, and flowers, and golden sheaves.
So may my life sweet perfume still diffuse,
And autumn skies be lit with golden hues—
My soul more filled with faith, and joy, and love,
Sweet earnests of our Father's home above."

—*From "Christian Treasury."*

Birthday Songs for Christian Households.

RETROSPECTION AND HOPE.

"O God of Bethel! by whose hand
Thy people still are fed;
Who through this weary pilgrimage
Hast all our fathers led:

"Praises and prayers we now present
Before Thy throne of grace:
God of our fathers! be the God
Of their succeeding race.

"Through each perplexing path of life
Our wandering footsteps guide;
Give us each day our daily bread,
And raiment fit provide.

"O spread Thy covering wings around,
Till all our wand rings cease,
And at our Father's loved abode
Our souls arrive in peace.

"Such blessings from Thy gracious hand,
Our humble prayers implore;
And Thou shalt be our chosen God,
And Portion evermore."

THE LORD HATH BEEN MINDFUL OF US, HE WILL BLESS US.

"Our helper God, we bless His name,
Whose love for ever is the same;
The tokens of whose gracious care
Open and crown and close each year.

"Amidst ten thousand snares we stand,
Supported by His guardian hand;
And see, when we review our ways,
Ten thousand monuments of praise.

"Thus far His arm hath led us on,
Thus far we make His mercies known;
And while we tread this weary land,
New mercies shall new songs demand.

"Our grateful souls, on Jordan's shore,
Shall raise one sacred pillar more;
Then bear in His bright courts above
Inscriptions of immortal love."

GOD'S PATERNAL CHARACTER.

Round Thy throne, O God our Father—
Glorious throne of richest grace—
We, Thy favoured children gather,
O reveal to us Thy face;
Then with pleasure
We will celebrate Thy praise.

Father, fountain of our being,
  Father source of blessedness!
Mighty, merciful, all-seeing,
  God of hope, and God of peace!
    Abba, Father,
      Thee we love, adore, and bless.

All we know of fond affection,
  All we feel of sympathy,
Scarcely shadows Thy perfection,
  Scarcely gives a glimpse of Thee:
    Abba, Father,
      Thine is love immense and free.

Live we then upon Thy fulness,
  Live we then unto Thy praise;
Thy example set before us,
  Through the remnant of our days:
    Abba, Father,
      Guide us in Thy holy ways.

MERCIES RECOUNTED.

Let us raise a birthday song,
  Praises to the Lord belong;
We have all deserved His frown,
  Yet His mercy doth us crown.

We with wondering hearts record
  How our Saviour, Christ the Lord,
Had on earth a natal day,
  Lowly in the manger lay.

Sing we, too, that joyful morn
He became the great "FIRST-BORN;
By His rising we are freed,
Made the sons of God indeed.

God be praised for life on earth,
God be praised for second birth;
God be praised for sins forgiven,
God be praised for hope of heaven.

Let Thy joy, Lord, be our strength,
Till we meet in heaven at length;
Join the family above,
In the heaven of perfect love.

SONG OF THE AGED SAINT.

"My God, my everlasting hope,
I live upon Thy truth;
Thy hands have held my childhood up,
And strengthened all my youth.

"Still has my life new wonders seen
Repeated every year;
Behold my days that yet remain,
I trust them to Thy care.

"Cast me not off when strength declines,
When hoary hairs arise;
And round me let Thy glory shine,
Whene'er Thy servant dies.

"Then in the history of my age,
When men review my days,
They 'll read Thy love in every page,
In every line Thy praise."

Family Register.

"God setteth the solitary in families."—*Ps.* lxviii. 6.

"Hail! wedded pair! to whom God sends
Obedient children, and faithful friends;
How sweet our daily comforts prove,
When they are season'd with His love."

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Family Register.

"And Enoch walked with God."—*Gen.* v. 22–2

Family Register.

"I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him."—*Gen.* xviii. 19.

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Family Register.

"Hast thou considered my servant Job?"—*Job.* i. 8.

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Family Register.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—*Josh.* xxiv. 15.

Family Register.

"Jehoiada had done good in Israel, both toward G
house."—2 *Chron.* xxiv. 16.

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Family Register.

"The father to the children shall make known Thy truth."—
Isa. xxxviii. 19.

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Family Register.

"With Thy blessing let the house of Thy servant be blessed for ever.
2 *Sam.* vii. 29.

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"O may each future age proclaim,
The honours of thy glorious name;
While pleased and thankful we remove
To join the family above."

Autographs of Friends.

"Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."—*Isa.* xlix. 16.

"But I am jealous of my heart,
Lest it should once from thee depart
Then let thy name be well imprest
Like a fair signet on *my* breast."

Autographs of Frie

"Our friends salute thee. Greet thy friends by

Autographs of Friends.

"Call to remembrance the former days."—*Heb.* x. 32.

Autographs of Friend

"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts."—2

Autographs of Friends.

"My fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life."—*Phil.* iv. 3.

Autographs of Friends.

"He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that G
is true."—*John* iii 33.

Autographs of Friends.

"The writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS."—*John* xix. 19.

Autographs of Friends.

"God hath given Him a name which is above every name."—*Phil.* ii. 9.

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"In thy fair book of life and grace
May I but find my name
Recorded in some humble place
Beneath my Lord, the Lamb.

"Thus will I, through eternal years,
Inspired by love divine;
Proclaim, in God the Father's ears,
Jesus—no name but thine."